

# SOME REMINISCENCES

BY

ALFRED SMEDLEY,

BELPER.

## Miss WOOD IN DERBYSHIRE.

A SERIES OF EXPERIMENTAL SEANCES DEMONSTRATING  
THE FACT THAT SPIRITS  
CAN APPEAR IN THE PHYSICAL FORM,

REPORTED BY

W. P. ADSHEAD, Belper.

ALSO

AN ACCOUNT OF MISS WOOD'S MEDIUMSHIP,

BY THE LATE

T. P. BARKAS, F.G.S., of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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*Illustrated with Plans and Portraits of a number of well known  
persons who were eye-witnesses of the Manifestations.*

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MR. ALFRED SMEDLEY, BELPER.

## Dedication.

*To my self-sacrificing Mother and Father, who toiled long and laboriously for the temporal and spiritual welfare of their eight Children;*

*To my ARISEN wife who, with rare industry, patience, and affection acted her part so well;*

*To our sister, Charlotte Bingham, whose unexpected but unmistakable visits from the "Beyond" brought joy unspeakable to our household; and*

*To my son, Henry Urban, whose religion consisted of the faithful performance of all his duties (and at whose suggestion I have pleasure in presenting this edition of 5,000 volumes to the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union),*

I INSCRIBE THIS VOLUME.

## PREFACE.

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**I**T is said that when the celebrated George Whitfield was preaching one of his heart-stirring sermons on Sheffield Moor, an old weather-beaten traveller, driving an ass with olden-time panniers over its back, who happened to be passing by, called out, "Whoa Roger!" He stood still and listened attentively while the great preacher eloquently portrayed the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth.

When Whitfield had graphically described the closing scenes in that wonderful life, the way-worn traveller exclaimed, "Well, it's such a great way off, and such a long time ago, we'll e'en believe it isn't true. Gee up Roger!" and went on his way.

These two objections, at any rate, cannot be made to the manifestations recorded in these pages, for they were witnessed by the well-known persons whose likenesses appear in the account, as well as by more than a dozen others, most of whom are still living in the body, and can speak with confidence of their genuineness.

The facts brought to light by Miss Wood's visit to Derbyshire (being obtained under strict test conditions) have been considered of such importance as to cause many intelligent persons to frequently express a desire that they should be republished.

As I was an eye witness of the Belper Manifestations, I have often been urged to undertake the work, and also to give some reminiscences connected with my own experience. Up to recently I have said no to all such requests made by friends in the flesh.

Having, however, for some time been urged by friends who have passed over the border, to undertake the task, I have, somewhat reluctantly, acquiesced.

This record will, I trust, prove serviceable, at least in two ways, viz., the *facts* will be preserved, and my own unpretentious reminiscences may be of service to some who are still in the bonds of man-made, mystifying theology.

ALFRED SMEDLEY.

PARK MOUNT,  
BELPER.

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## CHAPTER I.

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'Any system of relig'ion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true religion.'—*Paine*.

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Sunday School Days—Public Services—Dreadful Hymns—  
Oh that I had never been born—Baxter's Heaven—Watts'  
Hell—The Devil Blinded—Mystifying Theology worse than  
useless.

IN submitting the following brief account of the state of my mind during my childhood and youth, and of some of the spiritual phenomena I have witnessed, I may here state that I was strictly brought up as a Wesleyan.

My father's family had been Wesleyans for several generations; his elder brother being a minister and a member of the "Legal hundred."

His grandfather entertained John Wesley, the founder of Wesleyan Methodism.

The old arm chair in which Wesley sat, on that (to them) memorable occasion, was handed down as an heir-loom in our family, and was looked upon as a curiosity.

There were eight children of us, my place being third. We were early and duly instructed in the orthodox theology of the old Wesleyan Methodist catechism type. We attended Sunday school twice, and as a rule evening service, the Sunday school children being kept in for morning service. Two or three of the teachers were stationed in each aisle during morning service, each having a long stick or wand, about nine feet long, with which he could

reach to the far end of the forms on which the rising generation sat, and anyone seen in mischief or sleeping received a smart cob on the head, which always succeeded in waking the sleepy culprit.

I well remember one of the teachers was noted for going to sleep himself as he stood keeping guard ; his hands grasping his wand, the bottom end of which rested on the floor. When he began to nod, his hands would slip down the wand at every shake. This eventually awoke him, and on opening his eyes and looking round, if he saw any of us nodding, would instantly drop his stick on the offender's head. We youngsters could not see the justice or consistency of this, but had to make the best of it.

As doctrinal sermons were generally preached in a morning, it was rather a tedious sleepy time, especially in hot weather.

In the early part of my life it was considered wicked to whistle, laugh, or play on a Sunday. Neither must we question any of the teaching given from the pulpit ; so we had to nurse our doubts as best we could.

As religion in those days was mainly to "Flee from the wrath to come," the serious-minded Sunday school teachers very naturally read and explained the lessons in a doleful voice.

The preachers usually held forth in funereal tones. Many of the prayers offered up—especially at the cottage prayer meetings—were prefaced with the following, viz:—"O Lord I thank Thee that I am still in the land of the living and on praying grounds and pleading terms with Thee. If I had had my deserts I should now have been in hell lifting up my voice in torments, crying out for a drop of water to cool my parched tongue."

The sentiments in some of the hymns that were frequently sung were such as to give the horrors to any serious-minded thinking person, and enough to frighten an intelligent child out of its senses.

I well remember the expression of fear on the countenance of many of those who engaged in singing such hymns as the following, viz:—

“What after death for me remains,  
 Celestial joys or hellish pains  
 To all eternity?  
 Where shall I find my destined place?  
 Shall I my everlasting days  
 With fiends or angels spend?”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Shall I amidst a ghastly band  
 Dragged to the judgment seat,  
 Far on the left with horror stand  
 My fearful doom to meet?  
 Will angel hands convey  
 Their brother to the bar,  
 Or devils drag my soul away  
 To meet its sentence there?”

The God-dishonouring theology taught was a constant source of misery to me, whatever it might have been to others, and the strangest thing to me was how anybody could possibly believe it and be happy when to a certainty, according to such teaching, a very large majority of the human race would be tormented in fire and brimstone to all eternity, without the faintest hope of either the slightest relief, or even annihilation. *Oh! how I wished hundreds of times that I had never been born.*

I have a lively recollection of two pictures in two of my father's books. If I remember rightly, they were Baxter's "Saints' Rest" and Watts' "World to Come."

In one was a picture of heaven, with "the great white throne," surrounded by angels having wings, &c. Somehow the place pictured had not much

attraction for me ; partly because my idea was that the king on the throne must of necessity be a cruel implacable being, and partly because it appeared to be unnatural.

The frontispiece in the other was the veritable catechism hell—"a pit full of fire and brimstone," out of which the lurid flames leaped forth, and in the midst of which there were the agonising faces of lost souls struggling to make their escape. At the mouth of the burning pit was His Satanic Majesty, with his great fierce glaring eyes, horns, hoofs, and tail, savagely thrusting the victims committed to his keeping down into the flames with a three-pronged fork.

This picture filled me with unspeakable horror ; and, although I was not more than six or seven years old, to do a service to mankind, as I thought, I scratched out both his eyes with a pin. As my father never said anything about this defacement, I concluded that either he had never noticed it, or, that he thought with me that it served the devil right.

In my childishness I could not for the life of me think but that, in all fairness, the lost in hell ought to be liberated when they had suffered for a period commensurate with their wrongdoing, or their unbelief—unbelief being the most deadly sin of all. Good deeds were only as "filthy rags, which would sink us lower down into hell." So said the pulpit.

As time went on, being extremely anxious to be among the *sheep*, I tried my very best to believe "the fall of man," "the plan of salvation," and all the rest of the old story of "salvation by faith," but somehow could never get sufficiently clear on the various points ; and, with my longer experience, I confess to having considerable sympathy with the miner who, when informed by his minister that unless he believed all the doctrines taught by his church (including two

and one are one, and one and none are three, &c.) he would most surely go to hell, replied: "Mester, it's no use; aw'll go to hell if aw con believe it!"

Such teaching never made any good impression on my mind, suggested no good thoughts, aroused no kindly feelings within me towards my fellow creatures, had no tendency even to encourage either love to God or man; but, on the contrary, it only had a mystifying and hardening effect, and tended to kill the very germs of that "love that casteth out all fear."

The acute suffering inflicted on serious-minded, intelligent, sensitive children, by the demoniacal teaching of those days (and I fear much of it is still taught in certain churches) must have driven millions either to wanton carelessness, rank atheism, or insanity.



## CHAPTER II.

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“No religion was ever divine which relied on terror instead of love.”—  
*Sir E. Arnold.*

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Apprenticed—Groping after Truth—Join Society—Sign Temperance Pledge—Crimean War—A Methodist Revivalist—Unique Prayer—Sermon to Young People—Glory Hallelujah!—“Truth Seeker”—Take a Wife—“Essays and Reviews”—Useless Theology—A Serpent for a Fish and a Stone for Bread.

When about 15 years old I was apprenticed to an iron moulder at the Alfretton Iron Works, Mr. Joseph Walker, a leading person in the Wesleyan society at Riddings, being my master.

I was a teacher in the Sunday school and a member of the choir, and joined the church when about 18, hoping and praying all the time that such clear spiritual light would be vouchsafed unto me as would satisfy the cravings of my spiritual nature. But no, that was not for me—under that dispensation at any rate.

About this time the great agitation occurred in the Wesleyan connexion. This was brought about by the Conference expelling the Revs. Everet, Dunn, and Griffith, three clever, popular ministers; the Rev. W. Griffith being the superintendent minister of our (Ripley) circuit. My parents, who were both class leaders, and nearly the whole of the Riddings society, took the part of the expelled ministers. The Reform movement spread rapidly and increased in intensity. The time soon came when the question arose as to whether the chapels belonged to the parsons or the people. That, however, had long been settled by Wesley's “Poll Deed,” which enabled the ministers to say (and to say truly) to the people: “The chapels are ours, but the debts are yours.”

As I took the part of the "reformers," this frequently brought me into conflict with my master. This ultimately (about a year after the termination of my apprenticeship) caused us to part, as he said "he could bear it no longer."

My next engagement was at Stanton Iron Works, near Nottingham, for about a year. I then took a situation at the Staveley Iron Works, where a foreman's post was offered me and accepted.

The following year I was sent for to open and manage a new foundry at Conisbro', near Doncaster.

At that time Conisbro' was a quaint old village, surrounded by grand romantic scenery. I liked the neighbourhood very much, with its fine old castle (which spoke to me of the past), its flowing river, rugged rocks, its hills and dales, its flowers and singing birds.

While there I attended the Wesleyan chapel, was a Sunday school teacher, and scraped tunes out of the 'cello in the choir. In this beautiful place, as in every other where my lot had been cast, I saw so much misery in families caused by drink, that I began to think seriously as to whether there was anything in total abstinence or not. I felt a little uneasy, and decided to try it for a while.

I was then taking a glass at dinner and supper. On telling my hostess she need not provide any more beer until further orders, she lifted her spectacles up and looked at me with amazement.

When noon came the beer was placed on the table as usual, but was left untouched; and the same again at supper.

When she saw I was serious in the matter, she said "Well, if you wain't drink beer it's no use providing it; but one thing is certain, if you doan't take beer to keep your strength up, you'll soon go off to nowt."

After trying it fairly for two months, I found I was better in every sense of the word. I then signed the pledge—that was early in 1854—and began at once to take an active part in the great temperance movement, that has produced more disinterested self-sacrificing men and women workers for the upliftment of humanity than any movement I know.

One Sunday, during the Crimean War, Isaac Marsden, of Doncaster, an original and popular revivalist, was the preacher for the day.

There had been serious complaints that the wants of our soldiers out in the Crimea were not sufficiently supplied.

At home the crops of the farmers and gardeners were suffering severely from continued drought. As usual when Isaac was the preacher a large congregation assembled for the morning service. After singing a hymn he commenced his prayer in a strong, clear voice, and delivered himself substantially as follows, viz:—

“We pray Thee, O Lord, to look in mercy upon us and grant us Thy salvation. May suitable weather be vouchsafed unto us, so that the produce of the earth may be ripened and garnered that both man and beast may live and not die. The very earth crieth out to Thee for rain. Potatoes want rain, cabbage wants rain, peas want rain, beans want rain, flowers and fruit—all want rain.

O Lord, give us rain !

Grass wants rain, wheat wants rain, oats want rain, barley wants rain, turnips want rain, mangolds want rain, the birds of the air and the farmer's poor fowls—all want rain. O Lord, send us rain, and plenty of it !

The poor bleating sheep are dying for want of rain. The farmer's horses and cattle are drooping for want of rain. 'The cattle upon a thousand hills'—Thine own cattle, Lord—are also dying for want of rain. O Thou that holdest the waters in the hollow of Thy hand, open the windows of heaven and send us rain that all life may be renewed, and all creation shall praise Thee!

And, O Lord, we would not forget our soldiers who are out in the Crimea yonder, fighting somebody's battles.

We understand they are suffering from sheer hunger, want of clothing and shelter, through somebody's neglect. We pray Thee, O Lord, to send them food to satisfy their hunger, clothing to cover their nakedness, and shelter to screen them from the elements during night.

No doubt but many of them were bad lads who ran away from kind mothers and fathers and from good homes, but that's no reason that they should be neglected and left to starve in a foreign country.

O heavenly Father, we pray Thee to supply all their temporal wants, and that right early.

And, O Lord, from what we hear, their spiritual wants are neglected even worse than their bodily wants. We pray Thee to enlighten their dark and wayward minds.

Send them spiritual teachers who have been converted, else how can they administer spiritual comfort and consolation to others?

Might as well send the devil as send them chaplains!

Send some Ranter parsons!! Send some Ranter parsons!!!—”

At this point everyone in the chapel (so far as I could see, and I sat behind the pulpit) burst out into unrestrained laughter, except Isaac, who, grave as a judge, went on to the close of his most unique prayer.

During the remainder of the service no one scarcely dare look at anyone else for fear of another general outburst.

At the close he announced that he should preach a sermon to young men and women in the evening, and wanted all the young folks in Conisbro' to be there; and I really think they did put in an appearance, for the chapel was crowded.

Being an old tradesman himself, and having passed through all the grades, from apprentice to employer, he knew well the temptations to which young people are subject.

Those who had gone for a laugh only, however, were disappointed, for he preached one of the most earnest, powerful, practical sermons to young people that I ever heard, referring to short measure, short weight, adulteration, pilfering, cheating, lying, drinking, gambling, impurity, &c.

When on another visit, at the close of the evening service he announced the usual prayer meeting, to which a goodly number stayed.

The meeting had not been long opened before there was considerable excitement manifested, when Isaac began calling out "Glory! glory!!" "Hallelujah! hallelujah!!" alternately, raising his fine voice higher at each word, till he fairly made the chapel ring; and when his voice failed him for want of breath, he called out: "Will sister Saxton shout a bit?"

Sister Saxton, a good old soul, a widow, was the chapel-keeper. She had evidently caught on, for she at once took up the strain and called out in a loud voice, "Glory! Glory!! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! for ever and ever!!" till she was quite exhausted.

Isaac now led off again with the same ejaculations, and was joined by a majority of the brethren and sisters present, Isaac's fine voice being the loudest. When they had continued the glory-hallelujah chorus till physically exhausted, peace prevailed for a space, which was broken by several of the good friends slowly repeating in a low voice, "Oh! this peace of God passeth all understanding."

I wish the reader to understand that I am not ridiculing religion. I simply relate what I witnessed and what appeared to be, and no doubt was to many of those present, the very highest enjoyment of which they were capable.

I hope some of the good folk who were present at the services described above may see this account, for they will be able to bear testimony to its general accuracy.\*

As change awaits all earthly things, so my connection with Conisbro' did not last much over a year. With my brother James, who had been with me at Staveley and Conisbro', and my elder brother, Frederick, we decided to commence a foundry of our own.

So, resigning my situation, we started the Eagle Iron Works at Belper in the spring of 1855.

\* NOTE.—Perhaps the then little girl—Gott, I think, her name was—who won a new dress from Isaac Marsden for committing the whole of the Book of Proverbs to memory, may see this. Her feat was a wonderful one, for she was able to repeat any number of verses from any part of the Book that she was called on to repeat. If this meets her eye I shall be pleased to hear from her, and glad to know what she remembers of the events, and I will send her a copy of this book as a memento of those "good old times."

Some time before removing to Belper I had purchased the works of Fowler and Wells, on phrenology, &c. ; also George and Andrew Combe's works, all of which were very interesting and useful to me, as, up to that time, my reading had been almost confined to what was published by the "Wesleyan Book Room"—rather meagre fare for an enquiring mind.

I next purchased Dr. Lee's five volumes of "The Truth Seeker," and read them with avidity. These set me thinking in earnest, and made me a truth seeker ; and such I hope to continue to all eternity.

Dr. Lee's works on "Temperance and Prohibition" were next added to my stock. They contain a vast fund of information, which shows him to have been *the* teacher of the great temperance reformation.

Soon after commencing business I did a wise thing, viz., I took to myself a wife—Miss S. A. Bingham, of Staveley, a true daughter of Wesleyanism.

We attended the Wesleyan chapel, she being a member of the minister's class ; but I never could bring my mind to again become a member of the church which had expelled thousands of good people because they loved liberty and hated priestly tyranny. The main body had also persisted in refusing to grant the reforms justly demanded by the reform party.

However, by repeated and pressing invitations, I became a Sunday school teacher, and attended regularly to my duties without teaching any theology either in my class or when addressing the school.

After a year had passed, I well remember the minister preaching on a Sunday morning a sermon on "God's Justice," which consisted of his raking up all the dreadful inhuman sayings and doings attributed to God between the backs of the Bible ; and in conclusion, evidently feeling he had made the picture rather too black, said, "But you must remember, my brethren, that 'God is love.'"

On arriving home I said to my wife: "Look here, my dear, if my happiness in the next world depends on my believing what that man has said about God this morning, I'm damned, and there's an end of it. It's simply blasphemy."

"It is a great pity God should be so misrepresented," she remarked.

Some time after this, just after we had had breakfast one Sunday, the superintendent minister called. When seated he asked: "What book may that be you are reading?"

"'Essays and Reviews,'" I replied.

"Ah! I would not advise you to read such a book," he remarked.

"Have you read it?" I asked.

"Well, no; but I have heard sufficient about it to know that it is a dangerous book," he answered.

"I have heard much about it too," I replied. "It is not very long since your colleague preached a sermon *against* it, in which he acknowledged he had not read it, but had only seen a short review of it; and, only a week or two ago, when Dr. Melson was at Belper, referring in his sermon to the same book, he said, 'The writers are a set of drivelling idiots.' It has about come to this: If ministers condemn a book from the pulpit, such book treating of any subject touching theology, it may, as a rule, be taken as a recommendation. It was that which caused me to obtain this one."

"That only confirms me in my opinion that you are pursuing a very dangerous course," he remarked.

"If to gain useful knowledge be a dangerous course, then am I content to pursue such a course," I answered.

"I think you have not attended chapel quite so regularly of late, and I fear this is one of the results of your reading unsuitable books," he remarked.

"We are seldom absent," I answered. "But now you refer to public worship, I may as well speak plainly on the subject. As a rule, when we have breakfasted on Sunday mornings, we have a little music, sing hymns, or converse, as the case may be; or take a short walk in the fields, all of which, when done in a proper mind, are conducive to a spirit of worship, and cause the soul's aspirations to mount on the wings of reverence and love to its Creator. At service time we are generally in our places at the chapel, and when the hymns and lessons are such as we can heartily join in, we gladly do so; but very often, after the text is announced, the sermon is of no more benefit to us than if you stood and beat on a dust-pan for 40 or 50 minutes. After the benediction is pronounced we return home spiritually hungry, cold, and disappointed. And if the countenances of a greater portion of the congregation is any indication of their state of mind, they also return home puzzled and hungry."

The sincere and well-meaning minister bid us "Good morning!" But he did not forget during the morning's service to specially warn his flock against free thought and unbelief.

Truly, when we asked a fish they gave us a serpent; when we *longed* for bread they gave us a stone.



### CHAPTER III.

Belief in these terrible doctrines (taught by the popular theology which dooms the mass of mankind to unutterable woe) is no longer possible. To persist in preaching them is to drive men—the great world to which you preach—into open infidelity."—*The Rev. Baldwin Brown.*

U.M.F. Church—Discussion Class—Eternal Punishment—Adam's Eden—Theology Discarded—Spiritualism—First Seance—Much Puzzled.

A short time after the incident related in the previous chapter, my excellent wife proposed we should leave the Wesleyans and join the Methodist Free Church—knowing their form of church government was much more acceptable to me. We both became members of the church, and, notwithstanding that I was not considered "orthodox," I was pressed to become the superintendent of the Sunday school, which post I accepted.

In connection with a local preacher's circuit discussion class, which I was invited to join, the subject of "Eternal Punishment" was put on the programme, and my name as the essayist or introducer. The ordinary Methodist teaching on this subject I discarded *in toto*, the subject being adjourned to the next meeting, which took place in due course, the minister of the circuit and the Rev. N. Rouse being present. Soon after the meeting was opened I was asked by one of the members what I had to say to what had just been advanced by the speaker.

"I will reserve what I have to say till my final reply to the whole," was my answer.

"Oh! but you will not be allowed any reply," said the minister who was in the chair.

My right to reply at the close, as the introducer of the subject, I insisted on, but the two ministers persisted in denying the right ; and, as not one of the local preachers present offered to defend free speech and the ordinary rules of debate, I protested and withdrew from the meeting. This was six or seven years after becoming a member with them.

As theological creeds and doctrines had for a considerable time occupied my very serious attention, I had been forced to the conclusion that most of so-called doctrinal teaching, with which my mind had been crammed in my childhood, was useless, and I gave it up.

Adam's literal Eden, beautiful as it had been represented, was struck off the map, so no ground was left for Adam either to stand or fall on.

When the theological foundation had crumbled away, the superstructure—the whole man-made theological fabric—toppled over.

All this had not taken place without much serious thought, and an earnest and prayerful desire to know the truth.

It had caused me much anxiety of mind to break away from so much that had been taught as indispensable to our eternal happiness. I had come to feel, however, that I was not in any way struggling against God, or anything that He had revealed, but against the errors and devices of man.

Such was the state of my mind when my attention was first drawn to the subject of modern spiritualism, which came about as follows :—

Walking on the street one day with a newspaper in my hand, I met Mr. Aquila Baldwin, then a liberal-minded, enlightened doctor's assistant—now Dr. Baldwin of Birmingham. He said : “ Good morning ; are you reading the ‘ Medium and Day-break ? ’ ”

"What is that? I do not know what you mean," I answered.

He then introduced the subject of spiritualism, informing me of some of its phenomena, which caused me to look at him with a dubious smile. He, however, was serious enough, and, after further explanations, I replied that although ghosts and the return of departed spirits and all that kind of thing were altogether outside my belief, still, my experience had taught me not to ridicule or pooh-pooh a subject of which I was totally ignorant.

"Would you like to attend a seance and see for yourself?" he asked.

"It would give me pleasure to do so," I replied. Accordingly, by invitation, I attended a meeting at which Mrs. Wigley was the medium for physical phenomena.

She sat in a cabinet, her feet being secure in a padded box so that she could not make any noise with them. Her hands were locked fast in stocks made for the purpose. All the persons present were well known to me, and of their honesty there was not the slightest doubt.

During the seance, which was dark, bells were rung, and musical instruments played inside the cabinet, high above the medium's head—said bells and instruments having been placed on shelves high up in the cabinet.

As both stocks and cabinet door had been fastened and locked by me, and the keys were in my pocket, I wondered how she could have freed herself, for I fully believed it was she who was performing.

Just before the close the bells and musical instruments were handed out of the cabinet one by one to the sitters through an aperture far above the reach of the medium, as fastened to her seat.

On a light being struck, the cabinet door was locked, and the medium was found locked fast in the stocks exactly as I had left her at the commencement.

Similar phenomena were witnessed by me on several occasions, and, although I could not detect fraud in any way, it did not land me beyond "very much puzzled," spirit being out of the question—so I thought.

In connection with our Sunday school and society there was an improvement, or discussion, class held weekly. In preparing the programme for the season, the minister entered the subject of "Spiritualism" for me to introduce. He was not aware of my having attended a few physical seances, and the subject had never come up between us. I strongly objected to undertaking to introduce a subject of which I knew nothing.

"It does not come on till the end of the term, and I will lend you some books on the subject," he said.

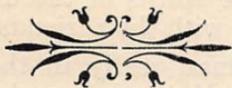
After further persuasion I undertook the subject, but, thanking him for his kind offer of books, informed him: "I will not read anything at all on the subject; I prefer to investigate myself and trust to my own observation."

In the meantime I heard an essay and discussion on the subject at a discussion class at the Congregational Church, also a sermon *against* Spiritualism at the Milford Church; and what struck me as peculiar was that neither the essayist nor the minister had made the slightest investigation of the subject nor witnessed any phenomena: they simply quoted a number of passages of Scripture against witchcraft, &c., taking care to pass by all that did not answer their purpose.

The minister grossly misrepresented the teachings of Spiritualism, as I afterwards found, by what *all* returning spirits tell us, and, in conclusion, informed

his congregation that "all who go after it will be visited with all the plagues written in the Bible."

As I had already learned by experience that misrepresentation and threats had been uttered by an ignorant or self-interested priesthood against all new movements that had for their object the upliftment of humanity, such statements from that quarter had ceased to have any deterring influence on me.



## CHAPTER IV.

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"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—*Paul.*

"And suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven."—*Stephen.*

"Entertains angels unawares."

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Seances with Mrs. Hitchcock—Remarkable Manifestation of Departed Sister—Children in the Spirit World—Message to a Sister—Indian Chief—Indian Girl—Indian Squaw's Story—The Dawning of the Morning brings Joy.

At this time Mrs. Hitchcock, an excellent test and trance medium, occasionally came into the town, and by invitation I attended one of her seances, and was very much surprised at what took place; being so sceptical and quite strange to such manifestations I really did not know what to think of them.

As I returned home I said to myself, "Can it really be possible for the spirits of the departed to return and communicate with their friends?"

"Was that woman really in the trance state, or was she acting? If the latter, she has acted some wonderful and varied parts to night."

Some who had received what purported to be messages from departed spirit friends were so delighted that they wept for very joy. I was puzzled beyond measure.

On informing my wife of what had taken place, she expressed a desire to invite the medium (who was a perfect stranger to us both) to hold a seance in our own house.

The invitation was given and accepted; a number of friends invited to be present also came at the time appointed.



MRS. HITCHCOCK.

The meeting was opened with a hymn and prayer. After singing a second hymn the medium passed into what appeared the trance state, and for a short time seemed dazed and unable to speak.

She then passed under the control of an intelligent being, opened her eyes, and manifested the greatest amazement.

After looking round the room very deliberately at various objects, then at one person after another, and fixing her eyes on my wife she ran across the room, and throwing her arms around her neck kissed her most affectionately, addressing her as "my dear sister."

After speaking with her in endearing terms she came across the room to me, and placing her right hand on my shoulder said, "Well, my good brother." (This was exactly as a deceased sister of my wife's had been in the habit of doing.) "How unspeakably glad I am for such a privilege as this!

"When we used to sit on the hearth at night conversing on various topics that used to interest us so much, we little expected we should ever have such a privilege. You know we used to sit up at night discussing theological questions till the embers in the grate died out, and sometimes a chiding voice from upstairs called out 'Alfred, Alfred, do come to bed. Do you know what time it is? You know Charlotte is not fit to sit up so late.'" This was precisely what had taken place, the exact words being used.

She referred to a number of incidents known only to her and ourselves. She asked for an album in which she had written the dedication, pointing this out, and also various pieces of poetry she had written in it.

She asked for a hymn book and desired us to sing what had been her favourite hymn, which at my request she instantly found. She next asked for a

Bible and asked me to read her favourite psalm. I requested her to find it, although I knew well which it was. She turned to it instantly, and I read, "The Lord is my Shepherd," etc.

When the psalm was finished the medium stood transfigured before us, her countenance was radiant, and her eyes bright with a heavenly light. Turning to my wife she said, "Sister, dear, by inviting strangers to your house to-night you have entertained angels unawares!"

After the meeting the medium remarked, "When under control I was strongly influenced to look round for a picture, but could not find it. I do not know what it meant, but the control was anxious to find a picture."

My wife replied, "My sister painted a picture of the Saviour bearing His Cross, many years ago, and it now hangs in our dining room."

The above incidents, combined with her mannerisms, and bearing in mind that the medium was an entire stranger to us, and uneducated, was sufficient evidence of her deceased sister to cause my wife to exclaim, "Of a truth, that *was* my sister Charlotte."

I may here add that Miss Bingham (Charlotte), and my wife, who was the younger of the two, had kept a boarding school for young ladies for a number of years, but a while after I had "robbed her of her right arm," as she declared, by marrying her sister, she had through physical weakness to give up her school.

For about six of her last years she was one of our family, and fortunate is that household which can have such a one as one of its members, for although she was too delicate to even assist in any household duties, she was one of the purest and noblest spiritually-minded women it was ever my lot to meet.

I cannot tell the extent of her influence on my family. It was felt by me the first time I was in her presence, as it has been very frequently since, both while in the body and since quitting the body, and is even now as I write these lines whispering "Joy and peace, my good brother, to thy household, and to all the faithful."

When in her last moments on earth, one bright calm Sabbath evening in summer, I was supporting her while my wife re-arranged her pillows, she turned her bright eyes to me as composedly as though it had been the springtime of her life, and exclaimed, "Why, this is the swelling of Jordan!" I did not hear

"The silent oar  
That parts the silent river,"

but the voice was still, the eyes were dim, and the hand that had wielded so kindly a pen had loosed its hold of my arm. She was gone. She had crossed the narrow stream, and left her mortal form in my arms.

We certainly at that time never expected to speak with her again in this world.

At our next seance Miss Bingham, controlling the same medium, said, "Sister dear, you will remember I used to tell you that my employment in heaven would be the tending and instructing of spirit children, and so it is. I do wish you could look upon my large group, which is composed of children from many lands, some of them having been poor waifs and strays when on earth, and had never heard the sweet voice of a loving mother.

"You would be delighted to see them all in a circle around me, standing or sitting at ease, and asking all kinds of questions without the slightest fear or restraint.

"With us there are no waifs or strays, for some kind spirit is appointed to receive every child, and act the part of mother to it on entering the spirit world.

“You parents who have lost your little ones need not fret and mourn for them, wondering what has become of them or where they are, for they are all placed under the care of some loving spirit mother; and, as there are no rich or poor with us, everyone is soon quite at home with the rest.

“If you only knew how anxious they are to whisper their tokens of love in your ears you would not neglect to provide the necessary conditions for them to make their presence known.”

We remembered her remarks quite well as to what her employment would be in heaven. My wife said to her—

“Charlotte, I wrote sister E., informing her about your having paid us a visit, and in writing back she said she should be glad if you could send her a message when you came again. Can you please oblige her?”

“I cannot writethrough this medium,” she answered, “but, if you will get pencil and paper, I will dictate a message to her.”

The request was complied with, and she dictated the following—

“Dear sister Elizabeth, your loving sister, Charlotte, wishes you thoroughly to investigate and test the subject of spiritualism :

“ A home of love I'll prepare for thee,  
Sweet sister dear.  
In joyous tones I'll sing to thee,  
Sweet sister dear.  
Our skies are clear, our fields are fair,  
And flowers perfume the balmy air,  
And all is bright and radiant here,  
Sweet sister dear.”

Two more verses were given, but the above will suffice to show the true spiritual beauty of her composition.

I may here add that hymn No. 223 in the Federation Hymn Book is one of her compositions.

The message finished, she said to my wife—

“Sister, dear, we were always taught that at death the die is cast; for ever and unalterably cast; but I have not found it so. God’s love is high enough, deep enough, and wide enough to embrace the whole human race; and, no matter how far we may advance, or how high we may soar, the hieroglyphics of eternal progression still point us onward and upward towards our Father, God!”

What can be more natural than for those who have spent their last years in our homes, and whose happiness and welfare were their constant thought and care, should be the first to bring the glad tidings.

“There is no death in God’s wide world,” as in the above case. And thousands have had similar experiences.

Besides being a very good test medium, Mrs. Hitchcock’s controls were numerous and very varied in their character.

One, calling himself Shagawatha, who in earth life was an Indian chief, frequently controlled; also a little Indian girl known to us as Poppy. I have often wished I had taken notes of some of the Chief’s noble addresses, as they would have been of great interest. Whether any other members of the circle did I have never learned.

One night a strange control manifested, and caused the medium to squat on the floor in Indian fashion.

“Poppy bring squaw this wigwam,” said the spirit.

“Oh! you know Poppy then, do you? Perhaps you were Poppy’s mother?” interrogated one of the friends.

"Poppy no be mine papoose. Poppy help squaw learn in big hunting ground up there. Poppy teach squaw talk medi. Poppy be good papoose; help squaw be happy," she replied.

"Do you know Shagawatha—the chief who sometimes speaks through this medium?" was asked.

"Me know big chief who say big talk through medi! Big chief take much papoose and squaw long sail on river; see much pretty flowers in hunting ground up there. Big chief good."

"Did you belong to his tribe when you lived here?" was asked.

"No; me no know big chief; me no know Poppy when me live wigwam down here.

"Me had chief and papoose in wigwam down here. Me chief go hunting. Me take papoose in canoe on river.

"Papoose much like go sail on river. White man come, kill me chief. White man take red man hunting ground. White man break me wigwam all pieces. White man leave squaw no chief, no papoose, no wigwam—all gone; no come back.

"Squaw be much trouble. Me go long sail in canoe on river; take no papoose, papoose all gone, no come back. Squaw no be happy. Squaw look in river, no see papoose face laugh in water.

"Flowers on river side no be pretty now. Squaw look at big trees, trees hang down head. Wind no blow music. Bird no sing sweet. Great mountain look big sad. Squaw full big sorrow. All happy gone, no come back. Squaw speak Great Spirit. Great Spirit no give me back papoose. Great Spirit send papoose whisper in me ear, say papoose gone up big hunting ground and be much happy now. Big chief take much squaw and papoose in fine canoe on big river up there. Papoose have much pretty flower up there.

“Papoose no come back live wigwam down here. Great Spirit send papoose some time, fetch squaw up big hunting ground, then squaw be much happy.”

This sorrowful account of the white man's cruel treatment of the red man, copied from my notes made at the time, was told in broken and most pathetic accents.

Not having read anything on the subject my short experience in the circle had to serve me. Brief as it was, however, it had dispelled my doubts and fears, and all the dark clouds that had overshadowed my path. The dawning of the morning had most assuredly come. The new earth and the new heaven were faintly making their appearance to my longing vision.

Old things were fast passing away, and all things were becoming new.

From my heart I rejoiced with exceeding great joy.



## CHAPTER V.

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“For thou bringest strange things to our ears; we would know, therefore, what these things mean.”—*The Athenians on Mars' Hill.*

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Discussion Class—Spiritualism—S. C. Hall—Seances with Lottie Fowler—Bastin and Taylor—Spirit Photo—Seance with Williams—Iron Ring Test—“John King” Materialises.

The date for my paper on “Spiritualism” had arrived. The class met in the vestry, and, as several other members of the class had attended one or two of the seances, much interest was manifested, which resulted in an adjournment.

The question caused such deep interest that the adjourned meeting had to be held in the large school-room, which was nearly full. The discussion became exciting, many of the friends taking part.

One of the local preachers present being asked what he had to say on the subject replied, “I know nowt about it, and nowt I want to know.”

Happy man! “Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.”

Towards the close of the meeting the minister, who was in the chair, and had evidently been sitting on thorns most of the night, stated that I should not be allowed to reply. This, however, I insisted on as my right, and after replying the meeting closed with more warmth than sunshine.

Having been informed that Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall were Spiritualists, and having occasion to write them for some of Mrs. Hall's books that I wanted for Sunday school prizes, I ventured to ask Mr. Hall if

the report concerning the medium, Mr. D. D. Home, having handled red-hot coal and put it on his (Mr. Hall's) fine head of hair without either of them being harmed was true; informing him that I was investigating Spiritualism, and was anxious to know from him if such a thing could be possible.

He wrote me a rather long and kind letter in reply, confirming the statement. He also sent me a copy of a pamphlet he had written for private circulation, principally among clergymen, in which the following portion of a letter, written by Mrs. Hall to the Earl of Dunraven, is found :—

Mr. Home rose from his chair, walked slowly to the fire-place, held his hands over the fire, and then drew out of the fire with his fingers a large lump of red and blazing coal—not from the top but from the middle of the fire. He held it in both hands, advanced to the table at which we were seated, and placed the coal, red and blazing as it was, on Mr. Hall's head, ruffling his white hair about it.

When it had remained there more than a minute he removed it and offered it to a lady, the wife of a clergyman who was present. She drew back. Home murmured "Little faith." He then tendered it to me (Mrs. Hall) and placed it on my open hand. I felt it to be warm, but not hot. He did the same by another of our guests. Before he took it back to the fire-place he put it on a sheet of paper. The paper was singed. There was not a hair of Mr. Hall's head singed. But when he combed it in the morning he combed out about 50 specks of cinder dust the blazing coal had flung off.

It is further stated that "eight persons who were present, including Lord Lindsey, would testify to the accuracy of the statement, and that fraud or delusion was impossible."

As business frequently called me to London, I had many opportunities of investigation, of which I availed myself.

I had a sitting with Miss Lottie Fowler, the American medium, who was over on a visit in London. She informed me that there was the spirit of my sister-in-law, Charlotte, present, and proceeded to describe her ailments very minutely; also the various traits of character of each of my children. Among other statements made by her she said:—

“Now, there is one thing she wishes me to tell you, and that is, you have done right by sending your eldest son to Cambridge. (This had taken place several years after she had passed away.)

“You are being urged to send your second son there, but she says you must not do so; you are to keep him at home to help at the works, as that is the place for him, and on no account are you to send him away to Cambridge.”

I may here add that only a week or two before this the head master of the Derby school had sent for me and strongly urged me to send my second son to Cambridge, stating he would be certain to come out “senior wrangler,” as his tutor had frequently told him he was a cleverer boy than ——, who had been at the same school, and who afterwards became “senior wrangler.” Her advice was acted upon.

At another time I had a sitting with Messrs. Bastian and Taylor, also American mediums, who were in London, in whose presence I witnessed a variety of phenomena; but, as the test conditions were not satisfactory to me, all went for nothing.

I do not say they were not genuine.

Mr. Geo. Lee, auctioneer, of Ripley, who was present, declared one of the materialised forms was his grandmother, who had brought him up from childhood.

Certainly the form of a matronly old woman, dressed in the regular old Derbyshire fashion—a blue print dress, white apron, and white-gophered bordered cap—appeared in full view.

I went to a photographer in London—Parks, I think his name was—in whose presence it was said spirit forms appeared on some of the photos taken by him. A female form appeared on the one taken of myself.

She was unknown to me, but I am quite sure there was no mortal form in the room except the photographer, Messrs. W. P. Adshead, G. Lee, and myself, and the position of her robe which enwrapped a portion of one of my arms precluded the possibility of the form having been on the plate previous to its being used for me.

On another occasion I went with Mr. Adshead to a seance, with Mr. Williams of Hatton Garden, London, in whose presence most wonderful physical phenomena were witnessed. We went early, arriving 20 minutes before either the medium or anyone else arrived.

We were shown up into the rooms on the first floor where the seances were held. On the mantel-shelf, among other articles, was an iron ring made of about three-eighths round iron. It was reported that the iron ring was sometimes put on the arm or wrist of one of the sitters after all had joined hands. I confess my scepticism on this particular point was *very strong*. We were strangers among strangers, and in a strange room. I suspected there was a trick in it. "Perhaps the ring had a secret spring or joint in it. It was simply impossible for a sound iron ring to be put on a person's arm unless it was passed on over the hand. Now I'm going to detect the trick." So I reasoned with myself, without making a single remark even to Mr. Adshead.

I examined the ring very carefully and found it was *perfectly sound*, the place where it had been welded

being plainly seen. I held it in my fingers and struck it with a bit of steel, and found it sound as a bell. "Ah!" thought I, "there may be, and most likely are, two or more rings; but I will find out if another one is substituted for this." So taking out my strong penknife, and using the sharp edge as a saw for some time, I succeeded in making a slight mark inside the ring, and quietly laid it down again on the mantel.

At the appointed time about eight of us sat round an ordinary heavy table—I on the medium's left side and having hold of his left hand. The ring, a small musical box, and several other articles were placed on the table. All joined hands, thus making a complete circle, which was only broken while one of the sitters near to the gas loosed his right hand in order to put out the light. My eyes were never off the ring until the darkness hid it from view, and I had firmly grasped the medium's hand in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of such a small ring being passed from his arm on to mine without me feeling it. The ring was only just large enough to pass over my hand when it was at liberty.

We had not been sitting long before small lights were seen flitting about the room; the bell, accompanied by a star-like light, left the table and quickly floated about the room, above our heads, ringing as it went.

Had it and the lights floated backward and forward on the same lines I should have thought that fine wires were fixed on which the bell could be moved by someone out of sight; but both lights and bell moved about in all directions, up and down, from side to side, end to end, and across the room, a star always being seen where the bell was heard. Other articles were floated about in a similar manner. A voice was heard above and about us. It drew near to us and spoke in my ear; so close was it that I plainly felt

the pressure of the lips and the breath on my ear. It did the same to most of the sitters. Small child-like hands touched my cheeks, and moved from side to side of the circle quick as thought, touching first one and then another about the face and ears. Just before the close of this part of the night's proceedings something cold touched my right wrist.

When the gas was lit the iron ring was found on my arm, and a great heavy arm chair stood on the centre of the table, which had been lifted from the hearth over the heads of the sitters, and as it stood on the table it was not far from touching the large chandelier. By whatever power the chair had been lifted over our heads, not the slightest noise had been made, nor the chandelier touched.

Taking the ring off my arm and holding it to the light, I was surprised to find it was the same one I had secretly marked. How it had been done I am unable to explain, except it be that spirit people can, under certain conditions, cause the particles of iron to dissolve until they are passed over the wrist, and then bring them together again.

We adjourned into the next room on the same floor, in one corner of which there stood a cabinet made of boards, with a door in the side and open at the top. In it stood a couch, on which the same medium laid down.

The company were invited to tie him fast with cords, but all declined. I had, however, provided some stamp edging, and being the last to leave the cabinet, after the medium had laid down, I shut the door and secretly stuck three pieces of the stamp edging over the joint of the door and frame-work, so that the door could not be opened without tearing it off.

We all sat round a table and turned off the gas as before, and joined hands. After singing a couple of hymns a slightly illuminated cloud was observed close to the ceiling in the corner opposite the cabinet. As the cloud slowly floated towards the centre of the room it grew brighter, and the upper portion of a man appeared in full view in the midst of it holding a strange-looking light in his hand, which grew so bright as to make the room light enough to read a newspaper easily. (There was no chandelier in this room.)

As the form floated over the centre of the table, its face being about half a yard above the level of our faces, it greeted us with "Good evening!" "Good evening!" replied several of those present, one of them informing the company that it was "John King."

His face was just opposite me. He had a fine deep bass voice, well-set dark eyes, intelligent countenance, fine head of black hair, whiskers, and full, rather long beard.

The medium at the time appeared to be fast asleep, as we could hear him breathing heavily. I, venturing to speak to the spirit, said, "John, your extraordinary lamp surprises me very much. Could you put it in my hand?"

"Yes," he promptly answered.

"Will it burn me?" I asked.

"No," he replied.

I at once liberated my right hand to take it, and in the twinkling of an eye the whole had vanished, leaving us in dense darkness.

One of the circle—a captain in the army or navy—scolded me for suddenly breaking the conditions by loosing my hand, saying it might cause serious injury to the medium.

I expressed my regret for the same, as I did not know it was out of order.

"Perhaps there is no harm done," remarked one of the circle. "Let us all join hands again and sing, and see if 'John' is able to appear again." The deep breathing of the medium had suddenly stopped when the form vanished. Before commencing to sing again, at my suggestion, each one held those sitting on their left by the wrist, thus allowing a certain amount of freedom to the right hand.

After singing again for a short time, the "cloudy pillar" appeared again, and floated to the centre of the table as before, "John's" lamp being very bright. I at once expressed my regret to him for having unconsciously broken the conditions and hoped no injury had been done to the medium, and was pleased to learn no harm had been done.

I again expressed my curiosity about his wonderful lamp, and informed him of our arrangement we had made to leave the sitters with the right hand free.

He again assured me it would not burn, so holding out my hand, he placed his lamp in it, when lo! to my great surprise, it was like a lump of solid warm flesh, exactly similar to my own. His fingers, too, felt as natural as mine.

After carefully examining it I returned it to 'John,' who handed it to those desiring to handle it, he floating over the table the while. After readily answering a number of questions he bid us "Good evening!" and floated over our heads back to where he had first appeared, his marvellous lamp gradually growing dimmer till both disappeared and we were again in darkness.

The deep breathing of the medium was again heard during the time that the form was in view. On the gas being lighted I at once examined the cabinet

door and found the stamp-edging intact, the door had not been opened, and the medium appeared to be waking from a deep sleep.

The above manifestations were certainly very surprising, and reminded me of "the pillar of cloud" seen by Moses, and from the midst of which a voice was heard. I was unable to detect any signs of fraud. The form appearing as it did, and floating over our heads, taking a position over the centre of the table around which we sat, and remaining superposed, there being no visible or tangible lower parts of his body; allowing us separately to examine the curious lamp; readily answering our questions, and then all vanishing the same way, to my mind precluded all possibility of fraud, and suggests to any reflective mind a superior intelligence, which had, in some inexplicable way unknown to modern chemistry, clothed the upper portion of the body with flesh, or the semblance of flesh.

The power to hold those particles and forces intact seemed to be in some way dependent on the sitters being in direct contact with each other. Hence its sudden disappearance when I broke the circle by liberating my hand.

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[NOTE.—In describing her visit to Panama, the late Mrs. BRITEN, in her intensely interesting *Autobiography*, says: "Here I trod on another memorable spot. Mr. Simonton (the American Consul) took me in a boat to one of the islands in the beautiful Bay of Panama, memorable as the home of the band of daring pirates headed by the once celebrated 'Henry Morgan,' whom King Charles II. of England, either in sport or mockery, knighted. It was this so-called 'Sir Henry Morgan' that 200 years later assumed the control of the renowned Davenport Brothers; he, as a spirit, alleging that his former career of crime and power gave him that peculiar physical strength which enabled him to perform those astonishing feats in returning to earth again which would have been impossible to more highly sublimated spirits. Now it is a fact that this very spirit, 'Morgan,' is one and the same so often cited by the physical mediums of England as the ubiquitous 'John King.' Without much interest in, or respect for, the pirate spirit, whose chief haunt I visited in his island home in the Bay of Panama, I still felt it a privilege to linger in a scene as famous in history as is my own career as a wandering Spiritualist."]

## CHAPTER VI.

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"Whereupon . . . I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—*Paul*.  
"And the spirit bade me go . . . nothing doubting."—*Peter*.

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Seances with Mrs. Everitt—Direct Spirit Voice—Wonderful Physical Phenomena—The Gospel of Love—We must Live the Christ-like Life—"They are all here; cannot you see Them?"—Bereavement—A Vision.

A short time after witnessing the "John King" manifestations, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, of London, being on a visit to Belper, were invited to hold a seance at our house, which they kindly and readily accepted.

At this meeting we had materialised hands, the direct spirit voice, bright lights floating about the room, and other manifestations.

At another time, at their own house, they very kindly gave another seance to a few friends from Derbyshire, including myself, at which, in broad daylight, a large dining table rose quite a foot from the floor, all our hands being above it.

Two of the heaviest men in the room (of our company) were invited by the direct spirit voice to put their chairs on the table and take their seats in them. They complied, and the table with its heavy burden rose quite six inches from the floor without mortal help.

After they had come off the spirit voice asked the same two persons to lift the table from the floor. They took hold of it, one at each end, but failed to lift it; and ultimately declared they could not stir it. I then tried to lift one corner, but to me it felt as if it were a part of the house.

As we sat round the table in open daylight I saw an ordinary chair leave a corner of the room and move to the table, a distance of about six feet, when no one was near it.

Mrs. Everitt has rendered very valuable service in spreading a knowledge of Spiritualism through her extraordinary mediumship, and it is to be hoped a record of such wonderful manifestations as have been in her presence will some time appear in print.

One evening I chanced to meet a lady friend of ours, a Wesleyan class leader, when the subject of Spiritualism was mentioned, and she remarked—

“I suppose you do not believe in the Bible now?”

“Oh! yes I do,” I replied, “but not in the so-called orthodox interpretation of it.”

“But you don’t believe in the Gospel, do you?” she asked.

“As to that question, my answer is ‘No’ and ‘Yes.’”

“What do you mean by ‘No’ and ‘Yes’?” she asked.

“Well,” I replied, “I do not believe one bit in a Gospel of blood, but I do believe with all my heart and soul in the Gospel of love! That is the only Gospel that can save and purify mankind.”

She looked puzzled, and, bidding me “Good night,” remarked: “I should very much like to talk the matter over with you some other time.”

She had many a confidential conversation afterwards with us on Spiritualism, which she very much enjoyed, but, Nicodemus like, she desired the matter keeping secret, and her wishes were strictly respected.

In consequence of my wife’s failing health, she was seldom able to leave the house for a considerable time. Although she had become a thorough Spiritualist she

had retained her church membership. I had severed my membership shortly after the discussion on "Spiritualism."

Her health continued to fail, and, after keeping her bed for three months, the doctor informed us he could do no more for her. It thus became evident that her earthly course was drawing to a close.

Among our friendly visitors, a kind lady friend, a Wesleyan (not the one referred to above), paid her a visit. From her remarks she was evidently afraid my wife would be lost. She appeared very solicitous about her spiritual state. After conversing with her in a very kind way a short time, she assured my wife that the blood of Jesus could make the foulest clean, asserting that "it is so efficacious that a single drop could wash away a whole mountain of sin," &c.

After the simple-minded and kind lady had left, I remarked: "It is very kind of her to come. Her motive is, without a doubt, good. Now, my dear, I want you to tell me if her words bring comfort and light to you. Is such teaching of service to you at such a time, and under such circumstances?"

"No; I cannot say that it is. We must *live* the Christ-like, self-sacrificing life—that only will avail us," she replied.

A short time before her decease, her eyes being fixed on something that seemed to fill her with pleasant surprise, she exclaimed: "Why! there is sister Charlotte here; and mother and father, and brother John, and sister Mary! And now they have brought Bessy Heap!! They are all here. Oh! how beautiful; how beautiful! Cannot you see them?" she asked.

"No, my dear; I very much wish I could," I answered.

“Cannot you see them?” she again asked in surprise; “why they are all here, and they are come to bear me away with them. Part of our family have crossed the flood, and soon the other part will be gathered home, and then we shall be a family complete in heaven.”

I may here explain that Bessy Heap had been the trusty family nurse, and my wife had always been a favourite with her.

Dr. Young must have witnessed some such scene to have enabled him to write in his *Night Thoughts*:—

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileged above the common walks of virtuous life,  
Quite in the verge of heaven.”

After the above ecstatic experience she lingered for some time. Then fixing her gaze steadily upward again, and lifting up her hands, she joined the convoy of angel friends who had come to usher her into that brighter spiritual world of which we had learned some little, and of some of whose inhabitants she had had a brief glimpse.

We laid her earthly form away in our family vault in the cemetery, and I was left alone with five children.

Reader, have you ever stood on the sorrow side of that river that parts the seen from the unseen? If you have, under similar circumstances, you know something of the pain and sorrow which the cup of bereavement brings.

In the very midst of such sorrow, however, the Spiritualist is comforted beyond all others; for after taking a final farewell of the mortal form of the dear one, not with a sure and certain *hope* of a *future*

resurrection, but with a knowledge that the emancipated spirit has already risen and is anxious to console and comfort those left behind.

It is at such times that Spiritualism proves a very balm of Gilead to the lonely aching heart of the bereaved. For—

“To sorrowing souls they bear a joy,  
To cheerless souls a love,  
To weary hearts they tidings bring  
Of holy rest above.”

As soon as my arisen wife was able to control the organism of Mrs. Hitchcock she unmistakably proved her identity, and expressed her great surprise at finding everything *so natural and real* in the spirit world. Truly—

“All, all on earth is shadow,  
All beyond is substance,  
The reverse is folly's creed.”

There came a time when my health failed. Acute pressure arising from business matters, overwork, and great anxiety, brought on their natural consequences. It was a hard fight. Continued worry by day and sleeplessness at night almost caused me to say: “It is enough; I will give up and take things easy, and pleasure as it may come.” So thought I as I lay on a sleepless bed, on the border of desperation.

When lo! there appeared an angelic form near the top of one corner of the bedroom. Its flowing spotless white robes were artistically adorned by ribbon of the most delicate tint of blue, which was passed about the shoulders and body in such a manner, and with such loops, bows, and ends that I had never seen.

It gently floated to my bed side, and, looking it in the face, I saw it was my arisen wife! She knelt down by the bed side, exactly where she had been

accustomed to kneel, morning and evening, when in the body. Addressing me in the sweetest accents, she said :

“Alfred, you must not think of giving up. You have still a great work to do, and you must endeavour to do it.

“Then, there are the children. They need all the help and care you can render them.

“No ; you must never give up. Be brave, and work your way through all your trials and difficulties. You will receive such help as will enable you to come off victorious at last. I may not tarry longer. Adieu ! Adieu !!”

She waved her hand as she floated away and vanished out of sight.

For some time I lay with my eyes fixed on the point at which she had disappeared. I became quite calm, and there and then decided that whatever lay before me I would endeavour to do my duty according to my light, no matter what opposition or obloquy I might have to encounter.

Do you, dear reader, say : “Oh, it was all fancy—the result of an over-wrought brain and over-strained nerves ?”

An over-wrought brain and nerves usually produce ugly visions. This was no fancy.

The beautiful robe she wore, the love, peace, and unspeakable calm that beamed forth from her eyes, the sweet words of comfort and encouragement imparted, were all real ; yes, quite real enough to me.

They are woven into and form a part of my life experience. My Spiritualistic experiences are very precious to me. They have “unearthed the Spirit World,” and have re-introduced us to the friends we

loved—and thought we had lost. We can say from our hearts, as we never before could, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” It has often brought us “green pastures and led us beside still waters.”

“Lo, in the golden sky,  
We angel-forms descry ;  
Celestial hosts descend to-day ;  
The friends of early years,  
From their exalted spheres  
Walk with us on our earthly way.

No more we sigh and mourn  
O'er loved and loving gone ;  
They throng around the path we go ;  
They bless us in our home,  
Are with us when we roam,  
Our conflicts and our triumphs know.

The grave hath lost its dread,  
To us there are no dead,  
But all do live and love as one ;  
Our doubts and fears depart,  
In each and every heart  
The holy will of God is done.”



## CHAPTER VII.

Mediumship—Responsibility of the Circle—First Money received by Miss Wood for any Seance—Successful Experimental Seances—Her Mediumship attested Genuine—Miss Wood—Personal Facts by P. T. Barkas, F.G.S., of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. Adshead's *present* Confirmation of his Report.

Some months after the incidents occurred as related in the last chapter, Mr. Adshead informed me that some of the Belper friends were anxious to engage a medium in whose presence materialised spirit forms were said to appear ; that a Miss Wood, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was such, and he wished to know if I would join them.

“Yes,” I replied, “if we can have such strict test conditions as will not leave a shadow of a doubt as to the genuineness of any manifestations that may appear ; but unless the conditions are thoroughly reliable I should not care to devote the time to it.”

“What test conditions would you propose as satisfactory ?” he asked.

“A large cage,” I answered, “covered with wire netting, in which the medium shall sit ; the doors to be fastened with screws from the outside, instead of being locked.”

“I am not sure whether the medium would agree to that ; but I will write and ask her,” he replied.

The medium was accordingly written to, and she readily agreed to the very stringent conditions.

The time for her visit was fixed, and the cage was made.

After deciding to publish this account, and thinking I could not do better than include the excellent report of "Miss Wood's visit to Derbyshire," which appeared in the *Medium and Daybreak* at the time, from the pen of Mr. W. P. Adshead, I wrote him informing him of my intention, asking him at the same time to kindly give me his present views on the report. In reply to my request I received the following courteous reply :—

Derby House, Belper, March 14th, 1900.

DEAR MR. SMEDLEY,

I am very glad indeed to find you are going to re-publish "Miss Wood in Derbyshire."

The record of Spiritualistic phenomena there given has done good in the past, and, judging from the present status of Spiritualism in this country, we may confidently hope that its influence in the future will operate in a greatly enlarged sphere.

It is a good many years since the account first appeared in the pages of the *Medium and Daybreak*—an account which at that time drew from the late Rev. Stainton Moses, Alderman Barkas, and others, a very cordial and sympathetic recognition of the phenomena and the evidence on which they rested ; and since that time nothing has occurred which could for a moment lead me to wish to have one line of the record either altered or suppressed.

I am, dear Mr. Smedley,

Yours truly,

W. P. ADSHEAD.

To the report that appeared in the *Medium and Daybreak* I have added a few paragraphs from my own notes, made at the time, which will be found in brackets.





CATHERINE ELIZABETH WOOD.

## MISS WOOD'S MEDIUMSHIP.

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So little is as yet known of the proper use of mediums, that it is not to be wondered at if they occasionally suffer from the circumstances in which they are placed. The "exposure" of mediums is one of the most prominent forms of thought in the public mind as regards Spiritualism. Those who know most of the subject are influenced in the least degree by this kind of rumour. The greater number of said "exposures" have been no exposures at all; they have either been the result of wilful conspiracy and direct lying, to injure the character of the medium, and thereby interrupt the progress of Spiritualism, or said exposures have proceeded from ambiguous phenomena, the nature of which the sitters were not in a position to decide upon. This contumely which has been heaped upon mediums, has proceeded principally from the false method which has been employed, of placing the sole responsibility of results upon the medium, whereas this burden should be borne by the sitters—those who constitute the circle.

Let us for a moment inquire what a medium is, and under what circumstances a medium performs the work. A physical medium is entirely passive, and, in truth, performs no work at all. He or she places him or herself into the hands of the circle or investigators, sits in whatever position he or she is assigned, undergoes any tests or fastenings which may be adjudged necessary to render it certain that the phenomena observed are not due to the tricks of said medium; and thus actually the responsibility is taken off the medium's shoulders as far as possible, and placed on to those of the investigators. If this is not so, what, in the name of common sense, is the use of all these protections? If the responsibility were understood to remain on the medium, all these fastenings and tests would be dispensed with.

The medium is evidently regarded by such investigators as an unworthy person who is not to be trusted, or, that the influences operating upon the medium while unconscious are of a kind which cannot be thoroughly relied upon. On this very low basis a great many investigations by non-Spiritualists and investigators are conducted, and to this class of minds and circumstances have mediums sometimes to subject themselves. Alas poor medium!

The medium, having been thus placed by the circle, generally passes into the unconscious trance, and loses his or her individuality, as when in deep sleep, till the conclusion of the seance, and in this state the medium is supposed to be subject to the control of his or her own particular guides. But when the circle is constituted of unfriendly individuals, enemies indeed, whose sole object it is to discover the medium tripping, and discredit Spiritualism as far as possible, the sphere of the circle becomes so adverse that the guides of the medium are not able to control, and the field is left open to the spiritual influences associated with the opposition. Under such circumstances, no wonder that anomalous manifestations should occur. The medium may be made to personate physicalised spirit-forms, by adopting some disguise derived from some portion of his or her garments. It is well known that spirits can carry objects great distances, and introduce them into closed rooms, and, possibly, opposition spirits may introduce articles into the circle, whereby to incriminate the mediums. By this process of antagonism to mediumship, exercised by spirits with adverse motives, mediums have been placed in positions, and thereby exposed to reproach, who would never have sought such a means of imposing upon the public, because the attempt would have, without fail, exposed them to detection.

To show that these phenomena representing spirits in the physical form may be obtained without doubt, and free from any suspicion of trick from adverse controls or on the part of the medium, this little work is published. It records a great variety of experiments, and extends over a considerable period of time.

To prove that Miss Wood's mediumship is a perennial and genuine fact, the following case, only recently reported, is taken from the beginning of her career many years ago, and when a knowledge of her powers was only known to her immediate friends and the members of the Newcastle Society for the Investigation of Spiritualism.

"THE FIRST MONEY THAT MISS WOOD RECEIVED FOR  
ANY SEANCE.

"This was what we called a 'dark seance'; nearly all our seances at this time were held in the dark, when the tying and untying of the medium, the ring test, and other physical phenomena took place. On the present occasion, one of our members, thinking himself more expert in tying knots than

his fellow-members, would venture a sixpence that he would tie her so securely that the spirits could not unloose her, nor could she possibly unloose herself. Permission was given. To work he went with as much cord and time as he chose to take, and he took some time to secure the medium and save his sixpence. First he tied the right hand at the wrist to the side of the chair, and then he tied the left; next he tied the elbows, then her feet to the chair rail, afterwards passing the cord around her waist, through the back of the chair, under and over her shoulders, crossing it over her back, and securing the ends behind the chair. He then expressed himself satisfied with this tying, and would give the medium sixpence if she or the spirits could undo the tying. I ought to state that flour was put into her hands as a further test. The table (not a small one) stood in the middle of the room, the gas chandelier was suspended above the middle of the table; there was quite sufficient room for two or three chairs between the table and the walls on all sides. All being ready, one of the members was requested to stand with matches in hand, ready to put out the gas and re-light at command, while all the rest of the company took their seats. The medium (under control) now gave the word, 'Put out the light,' and in the same breath, 'Light up,' which was done instantly, when the medium and chair were found to have been lifted on to the table.

"After examining the tying, and seeing that all was right, the light was again put out and instantly relighted, when the medium and chair were found to be on the floor. This was repeated three or four times. The medium and chair were now on the table, the cords, &c., closely examined, and as Mr. P——was not willing to lose his sixpence without having his sixpennyworth, he, in particular, examined the fastenings and other precautions against trickery very minutely, and expressed his entire satisfaction. It ought to be stated that the medium was entranced all the time, and spoke under control. Two iron rings, five inches in diameter, made of quarter-inch iron, were next laid on the table, and the light ordered to be put out and immediately re-lighted. This was done, and one of the iron rings was found to be on the right arm of the medium between the tyings on her wrist and elbow. Another close examination of the fastenings was now made, with the result of finding them to be thoroughly secure, and, amidst exclamations of astonishment, one person was asking another such questions

as 'How did the ring get on to the arm? Matter through matter! Did it pass through the arm, or the arm through it?' Who can tell?

"Order having been restored, and all seated, except Mr.—, who stood, match in hand, ready to obey the order, which was given; 'Light out,'—'Quick, re-light,' but before the light was well out, the ring was thrown against the opposite wall and fell on the floor with a ringing noise. The light was once more ordered to be extinguished, and in less than one minute the cords were thrown in the face of Mr.—, who at once confessed that he was beaten, and handed over to Miss Wood the first sixpence she received for the exercise of her mediumship. No more severe test could possibly be applied, in a dark seance, than that to which Miss Wood was subjected on that occasion, to the complete satisfaction of all present.

"WILLIAM ARMSTRONG.

"*Cross Houses, Upper Claremont, Newcastle-on-Tyne.*"

At the present time Miss Wood is sitting for materialisations in the light, before the members and friends of the same society. The following is a report of one of her usual seances, published in the *Medium and Daybreak*, Oct. 25, 1878:

"SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENTAL SEANCE.

"This morning, Oct. 20, I had the pleasure of witnessing some very convincing form manifestations through the medial power of Miss C. E. Wood, at the Newcastle society's rooms. I will spare unnecessary detail, and shortly say that the cabinet, which consisted of a curtain suspended across the corner of the room, was inspected by myself and others, both previous to and after the seance. The medium sat outside of the cabinet in full view of all the sitters, numbering nineteen, the whole of the time, and was never once out of their sight. Three forms successively appeared, the first purporting to be a woman, who, after several efforts, walked out of the cabinet and passed around the medium, and re-entered the cabinet on the other side of her. At the solicitation of the sitters she repeated this. The next form purported to be a child, who came out of the cabinet, and succeeded in getting about two feet clear of the medium, but could not get around her. The last form was a large one, and purported to be that of a man, but did not succeed in getting far out.

"The only improvement I could have wished was for the light to have been stronger; but as it was I could see all the sitters and the medium distinctly. 'Pocka' controlled and spoke through the medium whilst the last two forms were out. Now the value of this to me, Sir, is that I never lost sight of the medium from first to last, and I am certain none of the sitters left their seats and went into the cabinet.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

"Newcastle-on-Tyne.

"H. A. KERSEY.

"We, the undersigned, testify to the correctness of the above report—

"John Hare, Chester Cresc.	"Jno. Mould, 12, St. Thomas Crescent.
"Martha Hare,            "	"Jas. Cameron, Gallowgate Steam Mills.
"Nellie Hare,            "	"W. C. Robson, 8, Brandling Place."
"H. Norris, 59, Newgate St.	
"E. Sanderson,           "	
"Jane Hammarbom, North-umberland Street.	

Miss Wood is equally successful in obtaining manifestations when she visits honest investigators in their own rooms. The following instance is quoted from the *Medium and Daybreak*, Feb. 28, 1879 :—

"A DECEASED WIFE MATERIALISES AND IS RECOGNISED  
BY HER HUSBAND.

"To the Editor.—Sir,—I think it my duty to inform the readers of your paper of a grand materialisation seance, held at the house of Mr. Ridley, Portobello. There were twenty-four persons present, including the medium, Miss Wood, who had sat the same morning at Newcastle; after the seance there, she had to walk to Portobello, as no trains run on the Team Valley line on Sundays. The weather being very unfavourable, it showed great willingness on the part of Miss Wood to walk a distance of seven miles. After the medium had received a little refreshment, we all took our seats in the room fitted up for the seance.

"The medium gave notice that she was quite willing to sit under any reasonable tests that any sitter had a desire to propose, but as many of us had sat with her before, we were quite convinced of the genuineness of her mediumship,

therefore, she retired into the cabinet. After singing a hymn, 'Pocka' controlled, and held a lively conversation with us; then 'Pocka' gave us some singing through her medium.

"We then commenced singing; but had scarcely finished, when the spirit-form of one of our friends appeared—a lady who had passed away some weeks ago, whose name is 'Mrs. B——.' Her husband, who was present, recognised her, and held communication with her. After the spirit had shaken hands with some of the sitters, she retired to the cabinet. Then from the cabinet came the spirit-form of 'Pocka,' who talked to us in the direct voice, then patted and kissed Mr. Livingston on the cheek; her little, dark face felt quite warm. After letting us all see her, she retired to the cabinet. Then came the spirit-form of one of Mr. Livingston's guides, who gave his name as 'Sepherafer.' This spirit promised through his medium the night before, that he would materialise himself through Miss Wood, and this had not been made known to her. He is an ancient Egyptian, and is very tall in stature; his height would be about five feet ten inches, which formed a great contrast to the form of 'Pocka.' He then retired to the cabinet and we commenced singing. After that re-appeared the form of 'Pocka,' who requested us to give her the baby of a lady who was present, which we gave to 'Pocka,' who carried it to the medium in the cabinet, after which she controlled her medium, and told us the power was exhausted. Mr. Livingston's guide then offered up an invocation and we separated, much pleased with what we had seen and heard.

Yours truly,

"LANCELOT RIDLEY, Chairman.

"WILLIAM GARDNER, Secretary.

"JOHN LIVINGSTON, Treasurer.

*"Portobello, near Chester-le-Street."*

Miss Wood was not in view, nor fastened on the above occasion; but the great difference in the size of the physicalised spirits, and the fact that one was recognised and that another appeared in accordance with a previous promise, is direct evidence of identity, even superior to seeing the medium at the same time with the spirit. "Pocka," Miss Wood's spirit-friend, is of small stature—a mere child—and black in the face, being a negro or Indian. These three very

different spirits appearing within a few minutes of one another is corroborative of the results recorded by Mr. Kersey above.

On Sunday morning, March 16, 1879, Mr. John Tyerman, of Australia, was present at the usual weekly sitting given by Miss Wood, and he thus reports in the *Medium* for April 4, 1879:—

“The morning I was there Miss Wood sat outside of the curtains, which formed a sort of cabinet, and was visible to all present; and besides being in sight, she kept speaking, under control, every minute or two, and especially when any form appeared or other manifestation was taking place, so that there could be no doubt as to her position. A materialised form appeared several times, and once moved slowly from one side of the curtain, around the medium, and in at the opposite side. I never before saw a form and the medium at the same time so distinctly. And while the form and the medium were both visible outside the curtain, a bell was rung, chairs were moved about, and other things were done inside the curtains, which all present heard. I then held a walking-stick inside the curtains, and it was taken out of my hand. A white pocket-handkerchief was laid on a chair just outside the curtains, and it was taken up on one end of the stick. It was next tied to the stick, and was then thrust out at the openings of the curtains, and waved repeatedly as a flag. The form finally came outside the curtains—the medium being outside all the time, bear in mind—and handed me the extemporised flag, which I took from it. After a few other things were done, the seance terminated. When the sitting was over, the curtains were thrown back, and the keenest sceptic would have found nothing but plain solid walls and floor—nothing to facilitate trickery by confederates. Besides, Mr. Mould, Mr. Kersey, Mr. Burnside, and other gentlemen who were present, had the whole conditions of their own arranging, and as they have no personal ends to serve, but are simply trying to get at genuine facts, the idea of imposture is, in view of all the facts of the case, utterly impossible.”

No more need be added. The facts, recorded under strict mechanical tests by Mr. Adshhead, are amply sustained by similar phenomena obtained under other tests of various kinds, both before and since the occurrence of the Derbyshire experiences.

## MISS WOOD'S MEDIUMSHIP.

BY T. P. BARKAS, F.G.S.

In an article which appeared in the *Medium and Daybreak*, May 4th, 1877, Mr. Barkas said Spiritualism had been investigated in Newcastle-on-Tyne for twenty-five years. Prior to 1872 the manifestations had taken place in private houses and before select circles. In that year a society was formed under the presidency of a very old worker in the cause, Mr. W. Armstrong, for the investigation of the phenomena, and in a few months several members of the society became developed as mediums. In the year 1873 it was discovered that two young ladies had very great mediumistic power. The one, Miss Wood, was at that time eighteen years of age, and the other, Miss Fairlamb, was about a year younger. For some trifling remuneration as a compensation for much time spent in the interests of the society, the young women devoted themselves to the work, and soon there were not only trance controls, but extraordinary movements of tables, chairs, bells, and other articles of furniture and musical instruments took place in the dark, under test conditions. In 1874 spectral forms of human faces and hands presented themselves at the openings of the cabinet in which the mediums were enclosed. Then fully developed forms; and, to make certain of the genuineness of these phenomena, private seances were organised in the houses of well-known gentlemen. "Rigid but friendly tests of many kinds were tried," says Mr. Barkas, "and the result was that materialisations took place, which nothing but a stubborn prejudice, perfectly inaccessible to the logic of facts, could resist or gainsay.

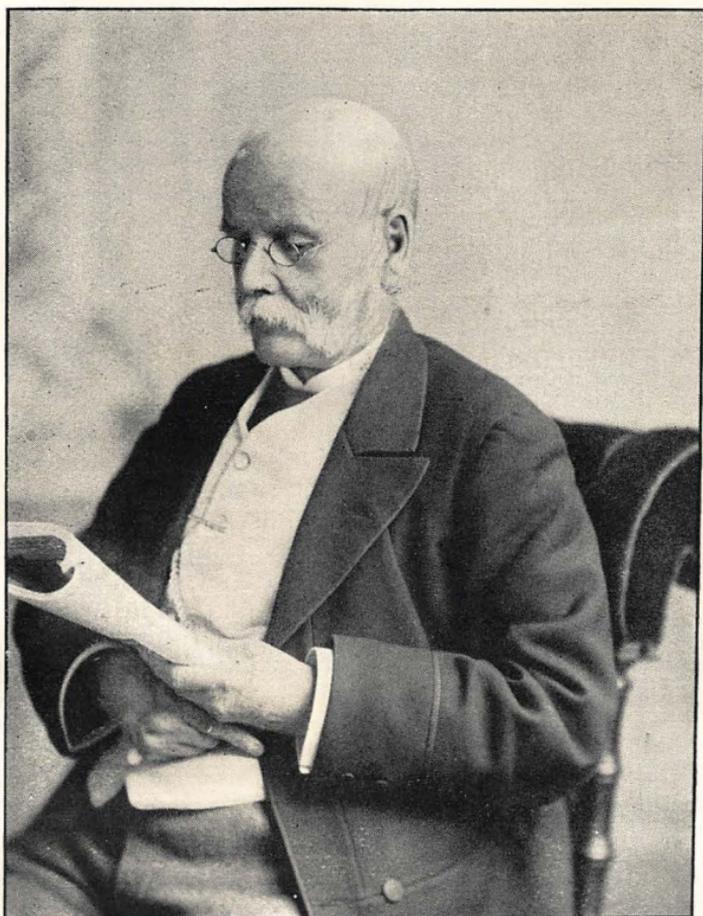
"I have seen through the mediumship of Miss Wood, in a private house, living forms walk from the curtained recess, which it was utterly impossible for her to simulate. I have seen children, women, and men of various ages, walk forth under her mediumship. I have seen a materialised form and the medium at the same time. I have had through her mediumship a childlike form standing beside me for about

half an hour together ; the child has placed its arms around my neck, and permitted me at the same time to place my arm around her neck, and has laid its cheek against mine, breathed upon my face, and, in fact, caressed me precisely as a child would do its parent or guardian. This was not in darkness, but in light, and in the presence of professors and fellows of one of the leading universities in the kingdom. I have, under these conditions, and after having handled the psychic form, seen it gradually vanish or dematerialise, and become invisible in the middle of the room.

“Miss Wood was born in October, 1854 ; she is the second daughter of Thomas Wood, of this town, and lost her elder sister, Maggie, when she was young. She remained with her parents until she was fourteen years of age, and at that time went to a situation, which she occupied until November, 1873, when she was engaged as a medium by the Newcastle Society. Her father, who is a working mechanic, and an investigator into Spiritualism, took her to a meeting of the society, in 1872, which speedily led to her development as a medium. She remained as one of the society’s mediums until about eight or ten months ago, when she withdrew from the society, and is now acting as an independent medium for these occult manifestations. Miss Wood’s early mediumistic experiences were of a very demonstrative kind, principally physical, and in the early stage of her mediumship she required careful and judicious supervision. Her chief controls are referred to in the letters of Mr. Adshead, but she is subject to strange controls, which there is some difficulty in banishing.

“It is of the utmost importance that her mediumship should not be injured, and for this purpose she should not sit with very miscellaneous audiences, and should be screened from all influences of an objectionable kind, as she, like many sensitives, is subject to controls that are attracted by improper surroundings.”

With Mr. Barkas’s experienced counsel, supporting those views enunciated in the opening page, this introduction closes.



MR. W. P. ADSHEAD, BELPER.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MISS WOOD IN DERBYSHIRE.

Value of Test Conditions—Cage in which Medium was placed—First Seance—Anticipatory—Second Seance—Spirit Form appears—Third Seance—Cage Test Tried—A Deceased Wife Recognised—Fourth Seance—Cage Test succeeds—Fifth Seance—'Pocka' Materialises—A Musical Miracle—Sixth Seance—Miss Wood screwed up in Cage—Seventh Seance—A Spiritual Sanctuary.

[*From the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK, March 9th, 1877.*]

About three years ago my friend, Mr. Baldwin, of Birmingham, informed me that at a recent seance in London he had grasped a materialised spirit-hand, and that on the same occasion a spirit-form had glided gently to the spot where he sat and had saluted him.

At this statement I greatly marvelled. I could not for a moment think of doubting my friend's honesty, and I hesitated to call in question his capacity for accurate observation; nevertheless I felt that I could not then believe in his singular experience as a fact.

I had just seen and read enough of Spiritualism to convince me there was something in it; but between my novice standpoint and the phenomenon of which my friend had spoken, there seemed to me to lie a whole realm of marvels which would not be easily traversed. However, I then determined that, cost what it might in time or money, I would not rest until I had proved, at least to my own satisfaction, whether or not the wonderful story to which I had listened was indeed a reality: that satisfaction to be grounded upon evidence which could not by any possibility be successfully disputed or overthrown.

And although I can now boast of a rather full experience in connection with phenomenal Spiritualism, strange as it may appear, I have to confess that until the last month I have not witnessed the marvellous phase of materialisation under conditions which in that respect left nothing to be desired, and which would justify me in saying, I know that the medium could not, either personally or by the aid of an accomplice, do what has been done.

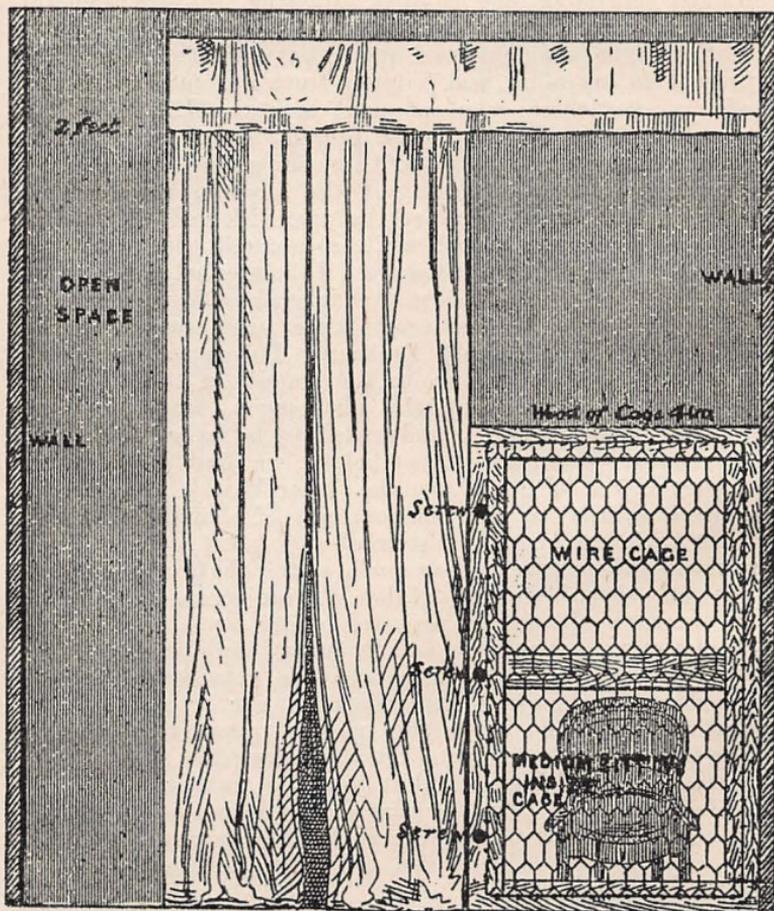
On one occasion I travelled 240 miles in order to attend a seance which was to be held under exceptionally good conditions. I had not the slightest reason to doubt the integrity of the medium, who on that occasion was bound to a large and heavy article of furniture in an ante-room which formed the cabinet, and which was divided by a set of dark curtains from the room in which the circle sat. Five forms walked out from the cabinet, differing in size, general appearance, and dress ; there was not the slightest indication that we were being imposed upon ; but still the feeling was present to my mind, and judging from a quiet chat I had with a gentleman who sat next me—an M.A. who had travelled from Oxford to be present that evening—the feeling was shared by him, that the seance would have been more satisfactory still, if the medium had been so secured within a space, under the supervision of all present, as to be powerless, and if, while so secured, the forms had walked out from the enclosure. This precisely appears to have been the view of this matter taken by Colonel Olcott.

He had spent a considerable time in investigating the mediumship of the Eddy Brothers. He appears to have had the greatest confidence in the honesty of the mediums, and the genuineness of the phenomena, while his own experience was amply corroborated by a large number of respectable witnesses ; nevertheless, we find him saying, at page 150 of "People from the Other World," in reference more especially to the phenomenon of dematerialisation, "But I confess, upon a question of such great moment, I am not satisfied to take even so much as the above and consider the case proven. In my opinion it is indispensable that the phenomenon should be repeated under such strictly test conditions as to leave no room for more than one opinion."

He then proceeds to give what he considers four test conditions, and says, "Submission to *one* or all of these concise tests would settle this question once and for ever." The first and most important test he describes thus : "The having William Eddy so shut into the further end of his cabinet by means of a door that should be bolted upon him, that he could not possibly come before the audience until the experiment was concluded, and until after the occurrence of the phenomenon."

This is a strong position, and exactly represents the conditions under which I was anxious to witness spirit-materialisation. To furnish myself and the friends in

Belper with such an opportunity, it was decided to invite Miss Wood, of Newcastle, to give a series of six seances, provided she would consent to sit under conditions arranged by ourselves, viz.: that a strong wire cage be prepared, large enough to contain an easy chair, for the medium; that this cage be placed against a solid wall, in which there



*Opening in Curtain.*

ELEVATION VIEW OF THE WIRE CAGE AND CABINET.

was not a window or break of any kind; that in a line with the cage, a space equal in length and width to that occupied by it should be enclosed by curtains, to form a cabinet, from which the materialised forms might walk out: and that both cabinet and cage be so completely under the supervision of every person in the room, that the smallest article could not be introduced into either without instant detection.

I wrote to Miss Wood stating exactly what was required. She replied, saying she was quite willing to visit Belper, and give six seances under our conditions: that is to say, she was quite willing to be fastened up in a cage.

A room admirably suited for the purpose was kindly placed at our disposal by our good friend Mr. H. Wheeldon, whose heart and hand are ever open and ready.

The construction of the cage was the next thing to be attended to, and as in this was to consist the test, great care was taken so to construct it that a strong man, if placed inside and properly secured by having the door screwed up, could not possibly extricate himself without cutting the wire or smashing the frames, or if it was possible for him to liberate himself by forcing the wire netting from its fastenings, he could not return to his position without the condition of the cage indicating the fact that he had been out.

Four strong wooden frames were prepared, a solid wooden bottom, and a frame for the top. These frames which were six feet high, and four feet wide, were covered with galvanised wire, two inches mesh, which was fastened on by staples which were driven through from the outside, after which, the frames, the top, and bottom were put together by having screws driven in from the outside.

The door which faced the sitters was hung upon hinges, and so made that when the medium went inside it would be secured with screws.

It will thus be seen that anyone placed inside was powerless to tamper with the screws, as they could only be reached from the outside, whilst the wire netting could only be removed by having the staples drawn from the outside, and could not possibly be refastened by anyone inside.

When the cage was placed in the position it was to occupy, it was found that two sides stood close against a solid wall in which there was not a flaw; one side of the cabinet was formed by another side of the cage; whilst the front was the door, which was at all times in full view of the sitters.

The curtains which were to form the cabinet were then hung, entirely covering the front of the cage, and on the completion of the whole, the most severely exacting were compelled to admit that if phenomena were obtained under such a test, there could be but one opinion as to their production.

On Monday, January 29th, Miss Wood arrived in Belper, accompanied by Miss Coltman, a young lady whose presence we were told would be an advantage to our seances. Under the circumstances we would rather Miss Wood had come alone, but we did not object to the presence of her companion, feeling quite confident that, in conducting the experiments on which we were about to enter, we could hold our own; indeed, after the first night it was discovered that Miss Coltman was not in any sense a factor in the problems awaiting solution.

She sang for us very sweetly, and we were all pleased to look upon her happy smiling face, but beyond contributing thus to our enjoyment, her share in anything that was done was *nil*; for when, as a precautionary measure, she was asked to occupy a seat far removed from the cage and cabinet, she instantly complied, and there remained during the whole of the seance. I mention this because I have been asked if Miss Wood had not a companion, and if she did not in some way help in the production of phenomena.

Our first seance was held on the evening of Miss Wood's arrival, Monday, Jan. 29. About thirty persons were present, occupying seats which were placed in four rows, one behind the other, a space of nearly six feet between the front row and the cabinet being left clear. A table stood against the cage door, on which were placed a musical box and a silver lamp, whose light could be increased or subdued, so as to meet every requirement.

A few minutes before seven o'clock Miss Wood entered the seance-room, in which she had not been before. On being asked what she thought of the cage, she said "It was a fine test," but could not give an opinion as to whether or not we would be successful in obtaining the phenomena we desired under such severe conditions, as she had never before sat in a cage for materialisation, but that in six seances, with good surroundings, it ought to be proved whether or not it could be done.

All being ready, Miss Wood entered the cage and seated herself in the chair; she was not bound to the chair. The door we screwed up, and the curtain dropped before it;

the table was placed against the cage door, and my chair behind the table and also against the cage door, as I was determined there should be neither egress nor ingress without my knowledge.

After such elaborate preparation, and remembering that expectation had been on tiptoe, and that several then present were hoping that evening to have the dream of years fulfilled, that they would be able to see what they had long desired to look upon—the crown put upon the brow of phenomenal Spiritualism—by seeing, hearing, and feeling a materialised spirit-form, it might seem chilling and disappointing in the extreme to be told, after sitting about two hours, that nothing could be done that night. However, such was the case.

“Pocka,” the watchful and ever attendant guide of the medium, told us that materialisation that night under such conditions could not take place, that the cage test being a new one, a repetition of the experiment would be necessary, but that “Benny,” another spirit-helper, hoped, before the medium left Belper, to succeed. She then suggested that the medium should sit behind the curtains on the following evening, and on Wednesday night try the cage test again, but, thanks to the matured experience of the Belper Spiritualists as investigators, the seance, unlike some, that have been marked by confusion and disorder when untrained phenomena-hunters have not had their curiosity gratified, was characterised by the greatest harmony and passivity from the first moment to the last, and all left the meeting feeling that they had been assisting in an experiment which might deserve, but could not command success. This augured well for future efforts.

On Tuesday evening, January 30th, the chair on which the medium sat was brought out of the cage and placed behind the curtains. The back of the chair in its broadest part is twenty-one inches, and in its narrowest part sixteen inches. A piece of broad tape was stitched round the narrowest part of the chair-back, the stitching covered with wax and impressed with my seal; the remaining portion of the same piece of tape was carried down to the floor, to which it was nailed, the nail being covered with wax and sealed. Tape was then stitched round the wrists of the medium, and these in turn were stitched to the tape which went round the chair, care being taken to place the hands of the medium at such a distance from each other that,

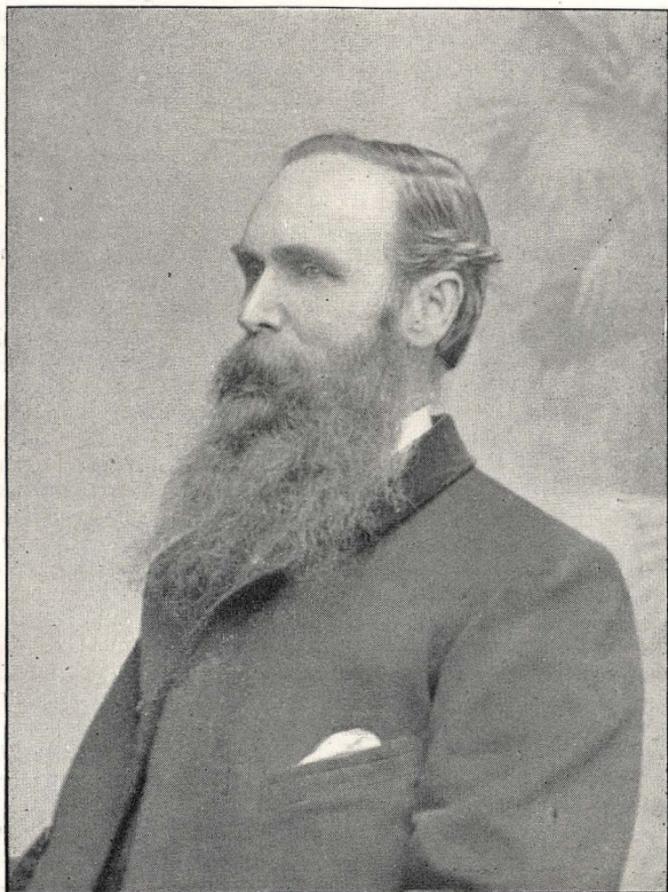
supposing the stitches had been severed by any means, the hands could not have been mutually helpful in placing matters as they were. Thus conditioned, the medium was thoroughly secured; and while we felt that phenomena obtained under such a test would be exceedingly difficult to account for on any sceptical theory, we were agreed to accept any manifestations which might occur as simply preparatory to those which we hoped would be given under conditions more severe.

The circle was a large one, amongst the number being our good friend Mr. G. Lee, of Ripley. The time passed pleasantly, in singing, in a comparison of notes by friends, and in general discussions, the subjects for which were suggested by "Pocka," or one of the sitters, usually by our excellent and earnest brother, Mr. S. Smedley—such talks, unlike discussions generally, tending to create and sustain a pleasant interest and healthy feeling.

We were then told to lower the light, join hands, and sing. After passing twenty minutes thus, the curtains were seen slowly to divide, and the dark mass of drapery was relieved by a streak of white down the centre. The curtains then closed for a minute. On dividing again, the white streak became broader and broader still, until the outline of a form robed in sheeny vestments was visible. Very gradually, and as if timidly, a form came forward, until it stood out distinctly against the dark shade of the curtains. The spirit did not speak, but moving about noiselessly, went from one to another, of those who sat on the front seats, and touched their hands. Beyond the fact that the form was taller than the medium, there was no opportunity of judging of any other difference which might exist between them.

The results up to this point indicate the folly of regarding the fruits of one or two seances, even with the same sitters and medium, and both good, as the best and highest examples which can be obtained in connection with any department of spiritual phenomena. The problem must be worked until the solution is secured.

On Wednesday evening, January 31st, Miss Wood entered the cage again; we were about to screw up the door, when the medium asked to be fastened to her chair as before. We deemed it unnecessary, but she replied she would rather be secured, adding, "If you get phenomena, you will obtain them under a double test!" She was therefore secured to



MR. HENRY WHEELDON,  
*In whose room the Seances were held.*

her chair in the manner before described, the cage door was screwed up, and we settled into our places.

After endeavouring for an hour to fill the programme of the evening, as on the two former occasions, by singing and chatting, "Poeka" being one of the most lively and entertaining of the contributors, we were told that materialisation could not be effected with the cage door fastened.

Here was a fine opportunity for the sceptic to say, "I told you so; the medium cannot get out of the cage, and therefore the thing cannot be done." An equally fine opportunity for the hypercritical objector to say, "If spirits can work with the door partially opened, why cannot they work with it screwed up." The criticism is unreasonable, for he has no proof that they cannot do both one and the other, inasmuch as he has not yet exhausted or got the full measure of the power in question. Spirit-power, like any other, is a conditioned quantity; results being entirely governed by conditions. We therefore, while we had fixed a point to reach which we would make every effort, in attempting to reach it were quite willing to adopt the suggestions and carry out the instructions of our friends on the other side. The cage door was therefore at once opened to a width of six inches, the door was fixed at this width of opening by the table being placed against it; and as I sat against the table, had the slightest attempt been made to open the door still wider, with the exactness of a barometer must the fact have been made known to me. In addition, two or three friends, like myself, narrowly watched the curtains, well knowing that the medium could not pass from the cage into the cabinet without these being disturbed, but not the slightest movement was discovered.

Under these conditions, having first lowered the light, and joined hands, we sat for about half an hour, when, while we were singing one of our favourite hymns, we were startled by a lady sitting in the front row of chairs rising to her feet, stretching out her hands, and exclaiming in most beseeching tones, "Do speak to me." These words were addressed to a beautifully radiant form, which she declares she distinctly saw, and recognised as the wife of a gentleman present, and who had recently passed to the higher life.

This emotion on the part of the lady continued for about fifteen minutes, rising and falling in intensity as the clairvoyant vision waxed and waned.



THE LATE MR. FREDK. SMEDLEY,  
*Of Messrs. Smedley Bros., Eagle Iron Works, Belper.*

Our attention was then directed to the space beyond the curtain which formed the far side of the cabinet, when came forth slowly, clothed in flowing white robes, the head being covered with a mantle of the same material which fell below the waist, a form at least fifteen inches taller than the medium.

A hand was laid on the head of a young lady who sat near the cabinet; others in the circle were touched; coming across to where I sat, a hand, at my request, was laid on mine. I at once felt that it was unlike that of the medium; the hand was larger, the fingers longer and altogether more substantial. The form did not speak, but by certain signs given in response to questions asked, we inferred we had before us, objectively, the spirit previously seen clairvoyantly, but in reference to that point the evidence was not strong enough to justify the friends present in affirming that such was the case.

Nothing more was done that evening. On examining the cage door it was found that the opening had not been increased; on going inside, the medium was discovered entranced, whilst the tapes and seals were in all respects as we had left them.

The results were certainly in advance of any previously obtained, but we had still to acknowledge that our test had not been realised, and it only therefore remained that we address ourselves to further experiment.

Precisely at seven o'clock on Thursday evening, February 1st, our circle met. For the most part it was composed as before; the fresh elements introduced, as the event proved, were not in any sense prejudicial.

After laying aside her walking jacket, and throwing her shawl round her shoulders, Miss Wood entered the cage, was bound and sealed in her chair, as before, after which the cage door was screwed up.

An examination of the cabinet proved there was nothing there but the bare floor and the curtains hung round.

The medium was soon controlled by "Pocka," who informed us the conditions were good. More than an hour was spent in the usual way, that is, in doing whatever would best serve to produce and sustain a harmonious atmosphere. We were then told to lower the light, join

hands, and sing—"Pocka" adding "Benny peaks; him tink him able terialise with cage door fast." This information of course we were delighted to receive. Nor had we long to wait, for "Pocka," addressing a young lady in the circle, said, "Benny peaks; him coming out, and him going kiss ou, and him say, ou feel him whiskers wet." We were then told to sing again. While we were doing so the curtains divided, and a white robed form was seen behind. In anticipation, I drew a long breath, for, judging from the position which I occupied, I felt quite confident that the test was complete, and that the phenomenon of materialisation had been obtained under our own severe conditions. Much quicker than on the former occasion the form stepped from behind the curtains. The upper portion of the robe was thrown back so that the face, notably the dark beard and whiskers, were distinctly seen. With a firmer step and swifter motion than we had yet seen manifested, the form walked across the floor towards the chair on which the young lady alluded to above sat, and gave her the promised kiss.

I addressed the spirit as "Benny," asking him to shake hands with me, which he did. Mr. A. Smedley and others were also thus favoured, Mr. Smedley remarking that "Benny" gave him a grip which made him wince. I handed him a two-foot rule which lay on the table, with this he proceeded to tap some of the sitters on the head; then, taking a bundle of small cords from the table, he laid the scourge right lustily on the shoulders of a young gentleman who had asked to be so treated.

The large musical box of which I have spoken, weighing 35 lbs., had been placed on the floor, close to the curtain; this he wound up with amazing celerity and set it going. After it had played a few tunes, he picked it up without any apparent difficulty, and carried it behind the curtains; returning again, he walked out towards the sitters forming the first circle, taking the hands of several, and then, to prove he was not such "stuff as dreams are made of," he jumped about, causing the floor most sensibly to shake.

After "Benny" retired, "Pocka" making an effort, managed for a moment to show herself between the curtains, and had then to relinquish the attempt, not having power to do more. As I felt certain would be the case, we found the

cage door screwed up, and the medium inside entranced, the tapes uncut, and the seals unbroken.

It is therefore a fair question to ask, Whence came the forms on which we had looked, which our own hands had handled, and which, so far as our senses would enable us to judge, had all the physical attributes of our common humanity?

I do not put the case too strongly when I say, if it was not the medium—and who will dare to say or undertake to prove it was—it could not under the circumstances, by any conceivable possibility, have been a human being, or in other words an aid or confederate.

The seance on Friday evening, February 2nd, at which the usual number of sitters were present, was in some of its features similar to the one held on Wednesday evening, inasmuch as after the medium had been secured in the usual way, it was found that materialisation could not be effected with the cage door fast. In one sense this was unfortunate, as three or four persons were present who, having been told of the wonderful test obtained on the previous evening, were most anxious to see the experiment repeated.

The phenomenal “reason why” the thing could not be done, I leave others to give, merely observing that in connection with many of the problems of life, which come before us daily for solution, that which makes the difference between *can* and *cannot* is often something scarcely appreciable, and that, therefore, it cannot be difficult to imagine that, in a realm of whose laws we know so little in connection with working out to a successful issue phenomena which are the “despair of science,” that which makes the difference between *can* and *cannot* may be something which to us is more inappreciable still.

However, so it was, and according to instructions the screws were drawn, and the cage door opened six inches, and fixed at that width by having the table placed against it.

Leaving the absolute test out of the question, the results of this evening's seance were in all respects as satisfactory as those of any previous sitting, if not more so; for we were made to realise that the poet, who, to millions, seemeth but a dreamer—one who, in his sweetest measures, telleth but an idle tale—may nevertheless be a prophet, who in sublime strains recounts the possibilities of human experience; for



MR. HENRY WIGLEY, - BELPER,  
*Who made the Cage.*

we were made, not to sing of it as a drawing-room recreation, but to know it as a fact, that

Then the forms of the departed  
 Enter at the open door—  
 The beloved ones, the true-hearted,  
 Come to visit me once more.  
 With a slow and noiseless footstep,  
 Come the messengers divine ;  
 Take the vacant chair beside me,  
 Lay their gentle hands in mine.

It was even so, for out of the darkness of the cabinet came forth, with slow and noiseless footsteps, "a messenger divine," whose simple presence told of immortality in ringing tones, which neither the war-whoop of materialistic science, legal ignorance, or theological intolerance will ever silence.

Going first to one of the sitters and then another, generally to gratify a desire to be touched, the spirit-form came towards me, and sitting down on the musical box which stood on the floor at my feet, "laid a gentle hand in mine."

Could the words of the poet have received a much more literal fulfilment? The form was about the height of "Benny," but as far as we could judge, of a more slender build, if such a word is proper in this connection. The robes of the spirit were very beautiful, falling in great profusion around the feet, the movements when walking and touching the hand were quite different from "Benny's," having none of his impulsiveness and dash ; the hand was very soft and warm, the touch or pressure was very gentle, indicating a sweet and loving nature. On rising from her seat, she went behind the curtains for a minute or two. When she returned, I asked her if she would kindly write me a few lines on paper which I had provided for the purpose. Approaching the table, she took the pencil I offered, and bending over the table wrote about ten lines, signing the same "Maggie." I saw every word written, and when the note was finished I took it up and put it in my pocket. After having remained with us about twenty minutes, "Maggie" retired.

"Pocka" then came out, a wonderfully different form to any that had preceded her ; she did not come far out, not more than eighteen inches from the cabinet ; her robes, when compared with those of the spirit who had just retired, were certainly remarkable ; she stood about as high as the table, and yet her dress was as beautifully adjusted as that of any who had preceded her.

[Seating herself on the floor, close to the musical box, which was on the ground near the cabinet, she started it playing, and appeared pleased with the music.

"Pocka, do you remember living on this earth?" I asked.

"Es," she replied.

"Can you remember anything you used to do then?" I asked.

"Es, me use to go to de temple and play music," she replied.

"What kind of instrument did you play?" I asked.

"Me play"—and gently clapping her hands, said, "What 'ou call"—"Cymbals" called out one of the friends.

"Es, me play cymbals in de temple," she replied.

"You appear very fond of music, can you make the musical box play the air only?" I asked.

"Es," she replied.

"Do so, if you please," I said.

At once the music proceeded with the *air only*, not another note being sounded.

"Now play the air and bass parts only," I said, which was immediately done and so on.

She caused it to play any one, two or three parts *only* at the same time as requested.

Here was a musical miracle, as miracles go, that neither the owner of the instrument or any other person present could perform; and I think we may include the maker of the musical box also.—A.S.]

This done, for lack of power our little friend had to leave us, and although in parting from her we could not say in the sense in which the words are generally used, "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes," we felt assured that in a few minutes she would be as truly lost to us as if the grave had hidden her from our sight. Wondrous law! marvellous chemistry! in accordance with which the elements, which in a short time and for a brief period the spirit has been able to gather around herself, enabling her to stand before us a "real presence," had been as quickly dissipated, floated off into thin air, and with unerring certainty, found their way back whence they came.

The seance on Saturday evening, February 3rd, was well attended, twenty-eight persons being present, amongst the number was Mr. Sowray, our postmaster. As his duties

would not permit him to be present until an hour after the seance commenced, the guides of the medium allowed the doors to be opened for his admission, and I was glad that the concession had been made, as he, as an investigator, had the opportunity of witnessing materialisation under as severe a test as I think it would be possible to apply—the medium being secured to her chair with tapes and seals, and the cage door screwed up. Before the form appeared we were told by “Pocka,” that the spirit who materialised on Wednesday evening would again come out of the cabinet. The spirit referred to was supposed to be the wife of a gentleman then present.

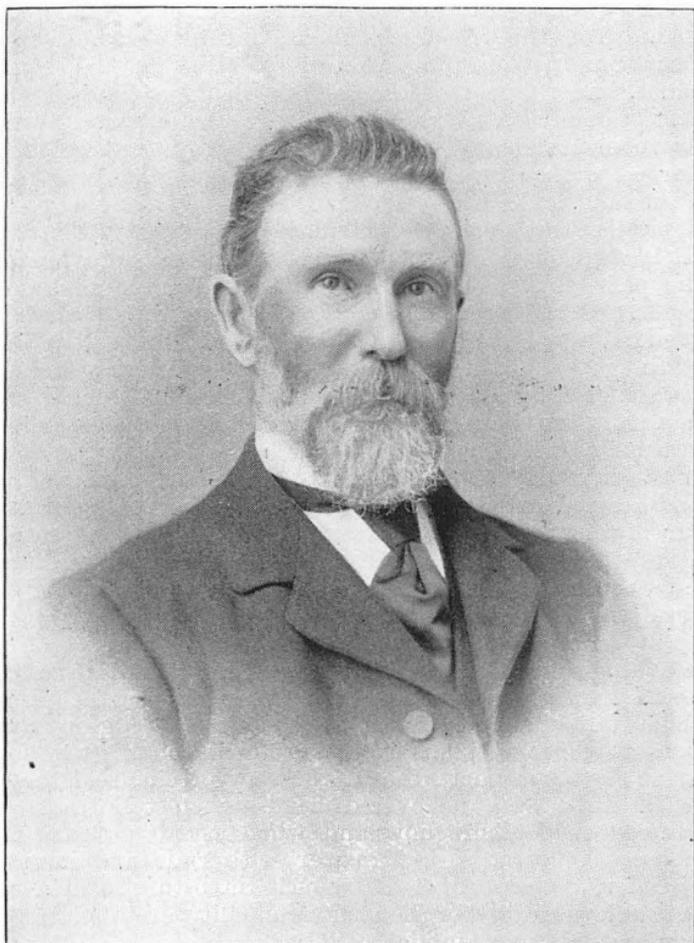
The sight as the figure emerged from behind the curtains, was one never to be forgotten. Taller considerably than the medium, her snowy white garments hung about her person with an infinite grace, and we all felt (I say it without exaggeration) that our visitor from the higher spheres stood before us a model of beauty, as far as form and attire were concerned, such as it would have been the joy of an artist’s heart to place upon his canvas.

The spirit seemed to possess much more power and confidence than on her former visit. Going almost at once to where her niece sat, she laid her hand upon her head and kissed her; she then made the circuit of the front rows of sitters, lingering longest near those who were dearest to her on earth; after which she raised her arm for the purpose of giving her hand to someone sitting behind, in doing which, the upper portion of her robe was thrown back, displaying an arm, long, well-formed, and white as marble.

Our friend Mrs. Hitchcock, of Nottingham, who was present, affirms she distinctly saw the features of the spirit, and without any mistake recognised them as those of the spirit announced by “Pocka,” and this testimony seems to have been confirmed by many little acts, trifling apparently in themselves, but significant when taken in connection with such declaration.

She remained with us a considerable time, and just before going, taking the hand of Mr. H. Wheeldon’s little daughter, she led her back towards the cabinet, then folding her in her robes, she stooped down and kissed her, then retired.

No other manifestation occurred; on examination we found the cage door screwed up, the medium entranced, tapes uncut, and seals unbroken.



**MR. GEORGE WHEELDON,**

*Of Messrs. Wheeldon Bros., Belper, at whose Workshop the Cage was made*

Thus for a second time, under a test as complete as can be devised, we had proved that to be possible which learned men tell us is impossible.

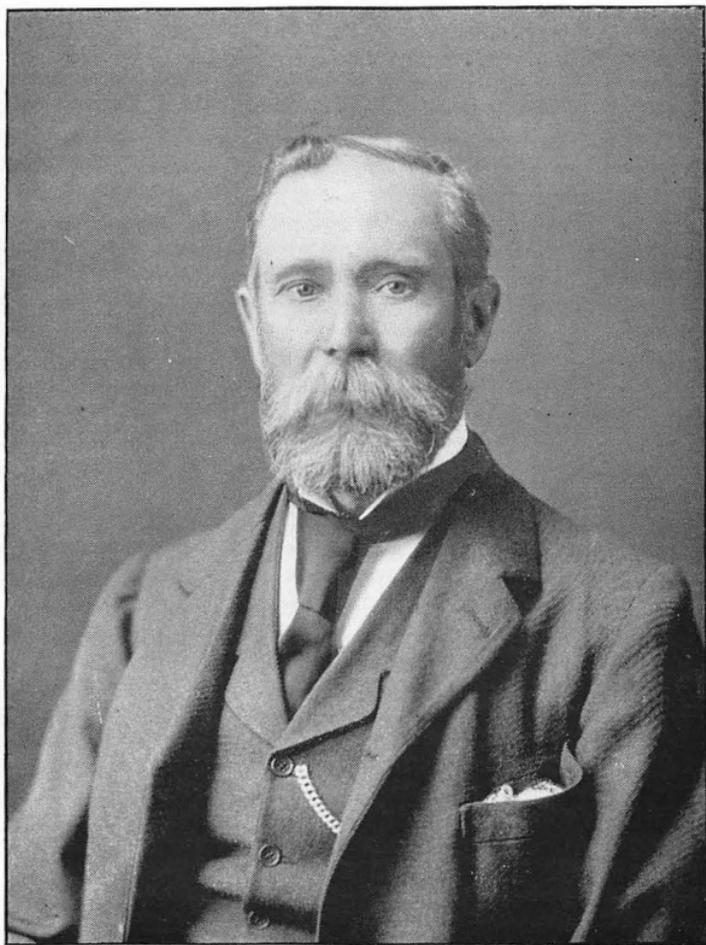
Verily, this great marvel is amongst the "things which are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes."

On Sunday morning, February 4th, we had another seance, and the last of the series. Being a time at which most of our friends would be at liberty, we met at 10 o'clock, the room being well filled. The very atmosphere seemed charged with pure spiritual feeling. Not in any sanctuary in the land could those who had assembled for the purpose of public worship, say with more propriety at that hour, "It is good to be here." We felt it was good to be there. The place had been consecrated for us by the presence of angels. It had become to us the trysting-ground where the dwellers in two worlds met to join hands.

We gathered in an upper room, quiet and secluded; it was not chosen because it would shelter us from disturbance, but we were reminded, both by the place and the occasion, of another room, in which nearly 2000 years ago, on the first day of the week, a number of persecuted but kind-hearted and loving men met, the door being shut for fear of the Jews; and that whilst the door was so shut, Jesus, the friend and brother whom they mourned, came and stood in their midst, saying, "Peace be unto you," thus "bringing life and immortality to light."

But such great changes in the world's estimate of men and things does the wheel of time bring round, it has come to pass that the men who regard the event and the place of which I have spoken with a devotion--a religious awe--equal to that which inspires the pilgrim on his way to the shrine of the prophet, who in the very precincts of the spot would walk with uncovered head--when told that what occurred then occurs now, and when asked to "turn aside and see the great sight," answer with rude and impudent rejoinder, "Blasphemy! Delusion! Imposture!" The men who talk so glibly of Thomas's infidelity are themselves a thousand-fold more infidel still.

The seance was in one of its features similar to two that had preceded it, for after the medium had been secured to her chair and screwed up in the cage for more than an hour, it was found necessary to open the cage door a few inches; this was done, the table being placed against it, and we had not long to wait before a form differing slightly from both



MR. WM. WHEELDON,  
*Of Messrs. Wheeldon Bros., Belfer.*

"Benny" and "Maggie," and greatly from the spirit who appeared on the previous evening, came from behind the curtains.

It was manifest that this was work to which the spirit had not been accustomed. After advancing and retiring several times, more confidence seemed to be acquired; gradually drawing clear of the cabinet, with cautious step, the spirit glided towards a gentleman sitting near me, and stood near him for some time. It soon transpired that one from whom he had parted years before, and with whom in the interval he had held communion through the mediumship of Mrs. Hitchcock and others, had that morning managed to demonstrate the fact that she still lived, in a manner more impressive than ever. It was his wife; of that fact he had no doubt, and we shared in his joy. She afterwards told her husband, through Mrs. Hitchcock, that she had thus manifested, and further, that she had been most anxious to bring with her the two children, who were with her in spirit-life, materialised, but had found it impossible to do so; however she quite hoped that on some future occasion even this would be accomplished.

The details of the seance need not be further described, suffice it to say that at the close we found the cage door as fixed, the medium entranced, the tapes uncut, and the seals unbroken.

We returned home, thanking God for the experience of the week, that the full and bright complement of all the glad messages we had ever received had come to us in a knowledge of the fact that the dear friends whom we had buried out of our sight, still live beneath brighter skies and happier surroundings than any they had known upon earth; and that they were able to return from their bright abode, not only to tell us of their own state, and to incite us to purity of life and high spiritual aspiration, as a sure means of redemption from evil, but also to announce the most glorious of all gospels, that the great sea of human life, which is for ever "breaking on the eternal shore," is illustrative to an extent and in a degree grander than had ever come within the range of earthly experience, of the power, the wisdom, and the love of our father, God; inasmuch as beyond the grave there was not only existence, but hope, and infinite progression for every child of the human race.

My narrative must here cease; it will be continued, telling of manifestations quite as wonderful as those now recorded.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MISS WOOD IN DERBY.

Powerful Tea-table Manifestations at Mrs. Ford's—Dr. Carpenter and Professor Crooks—"Another Grand Exposure"—Jo Cose—Second Seance—Medium dresses in Dark Clothing—Another Seance—Medium fastened by the neck with a Collar.

[From the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK, March 23rd, 1877.]

In continuation of my narrative, I have to say that Miss Wood, having decided to prolong her stay in Derbyshire, accepted the invitation of friends in Derby to give materialisation seances there. Thither accordingly she and Miss Coltman went on Monday, February 5th.

In this connection, I think it is only justice to Miss Coltman to say that her presence on the scene had reference exclusively to Miss Wood's comfort when absent from home and amongst strangers. The medium having with her, both day and night, a loved and pleasant companion, is, as all Spiritualists know, if not an absolute necessity, an excellent preparation for a successful seance. This is the sense in which it was said Miss Coltman's services would be an advantage to our circles, and in that sense undoubtedly they were.

It was arranged to hold the first seance on the following evening at the residence of Mrs. Ford. In the afternoon of that day half-a-dozen friends met there for tea, Miss Wood being amongst the number, when she unmistakably proved herself to be, as far as physical phenomena are concerned, what I am disposed to call an "all-round" medium, that is to say, it would appear as if every phase of physical phenomena, from the tiny rap to the fully materialised form, may, when conditions serve, be obtained through her mediumship.

During tea manifestations occurred which furnished an amusing, and, at the same time, an instructive comment upon a lecture delivered by Dr. Carpenter at the London Institution, Finsbury Circus, on "Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and Allied Subjects," on an evening in December, last year.

In speaking of the phenomena of Spiritualism, the lecturer made use of language which, in the opinion of those who knew better, will not enhance his reputation either for wisdom or discretion. Indeed, in hundreds of homes in England to-day his "wise saws" and those of his brothers of the Royal Society who share his views in reference to this matter, are laughed at and regarded as the most absurd trifling with a subject vaster in its proportions and more important in the fields of research which it opens out than any to which they have hitherto applied their powers.

Thus speaks the learned scientist :—"They were told of things which were done, which, on the face of them, were incredible, such as tables floating in the air, and, in investigating such matters, they must begin by looking out for self-deception or intentional deception." But what if, after the most severe scrutiny, neither one nor the other can be discovered? This is exactly the point where our quarrel with scientific dogmatism commences; for we assert that, after the most exhaustive investigation of the phenomena called spiritual, there is a large residuum of fact, which cannot be accounted for on any theory known to the schools of mere material science, while the representatives of these schools, on the other hand, say: "If the phenomena you describe have occurred, they have been produced by methods, easily explained and easily repeated, which have escaped your observation," and that without offering a shadow of proof in support of what they say. Unscientific and illogical as this position is, Dr. Carpenter advances one which is more ridiculous still, by virtually claiming that the man of small opportunity for investigating spiritual phenomena is better qualified to judge of their true character than the man who, having large opportunity, has made a good use of it. For, alluding to the experiments of Mr. Crookes, he says: "Mr. Crookes has made the most interesting discovery of the radiometer, but if he had used the same skill in investigating the other classes of the phenomena he thought that he would have been led to see them from a different point of view."

Leaving Mr. Crookes to deal with this left-handed compliment as he may, I take leave to say, that, without making the slightest pretention to a scientific training, I am in every respect as well qualified as any physiologist or physicist in the land to decide the question, on its merits, as to whether or not a table rises from the floor, whether or not the

levitation is produced by a vulgar trick, and whether or not my mental condition was such as to enable me at the time to form a correct opinion.

It is this unwillingness on the part of sceptical scientists, to grant to those who differ from them in this matter the same ability for correct observations which they claim for themselves, that has fairly exposed them to the withering rebuke which is administered in the following paragraph, which appeared in the *Banner of Light*, of Feb. 17th, under the caption "Another Grand Exposure!"

"Jo Cose states that he has met a highly educated man, who declares that the prevalent belief that there exists a European continent is one of the most stupendous delusions of this deluded age.

"London and Paris never had an existence outside of the brains of befuddled perambulating swindlers. Ships that are said to go to Europe do no such thing, but sail in circles of a thousand miles in diameter. Passengers in these ships fondly imagine they land in the ports of great cities, and are deluded into the idea that they travel in lands beyond the sea, while the real fact is, they do not leave the vessel until they disembark at the place from which they started.

"This gentleman avers that the delusion is caused by the electro-biological-magnetic-supermundane-mesmeristic action of the water on which the ship floats, producing an unconscious cerebation of the molecular muscles. Jo Cose thinks this very evident, if not more so.

"The gentleman alluded to proposes to devote his life and energies to the exposure of this wide-spread and 'pestilent delusion,' that has for centuries despoiled the world of its best minds."

It is perhaps questionable whether even such satire carries a sting for minds that are proof against a simple and honest recital of facts, such as that of which I am about to speak.

As is ever the case when I am privileged to share the hospitality of our kind hostess, during tea our conversation ran along merrily as a "peal of marriage-bells," when suddenly the table rose from the floor. As such an upheaval was no child's play, I asked if it was "Benny" who was thus operating, when three tremendous blows were given with the leg of the table nearest to where I sat. The work appeared to be done with as much ease as though I had struck the floor three times with a walking-stick.

The movements of the table increased to a degree which compelled us, in order to prevent our tea from being spilt, to raise our cups a considerable distance above its surface. The table did not always rise at a point near the medium, but sometimes at a considerable distance from her. Again it would move rapidly along the floor and back, which motion could only be produced by pushing or pulling, which most assuredly was not done by any one sitting round the table, while the intelligence connected with the movements was demonstrated, by answers to a number of questions being given, by means of direct raps, or distinct movements of the table.

Had a student of dynamics been present, he would, I think, if his opinion had been asked of Miss Wood's power, looking at her simply as a weight-lifting machine, have said, "I think it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for so small and slender a young lady, even if she stood on her feet and used both her hands for the purpose, to move the table as it has been moved"; and his opinion would have been quite correct, for so heavy is the table in question, when the room came to be cleared for the seance it required three individuals to transfer it to the drawing-room. So that Dr. Carpenter's two theories, "self-deception and intentional deception," must be confined to those present, exclusive of the medium. But to suggest that the latter was the procuring cause of the manifestations is simply an insult. Amusement was not their "holy grail." As well talk of children playing at "blind man's buff" around their mother's grave, as talk of those whose only object in devoting time and spending money in conducting these investigations is to obtain evidence of man's immortality, or accept any other conclusion to which the phenomena legitimately conduct, sitting round a tea-table and using their power and skill to deceive each other; while, in reference to the former theory, that of "self-deception," it is enough to say that everyone present, while the manifestations were going on, was in a condition to distinguish between white bread and brown, to lift a thin slice of bread-and-butter, to discover where their kind offices were required, and from the variety spread before them, choose their food on the soundest dietetic principles. If their own senses were faithful, if they were to be trusted in regard to this larger service, it is not presumption to say they were perfectly reliable when they testified to the fact that the

table did move, and when they enabled us carefully to observe and minutely describe its movements.

After tea the room was cleared for the seance; a cabinet was formed by suspending from a rod fixed near the ceiling, a set of dark curtains, which completely enclosed one corner of the room. In the cabinet was placed an easy-chair for the medium, leaving room enough for materialization purposes.

Eighteen persons were present, amongst the number were two gentlemen who had seen little or nothing of spiritual phenomena and were sceptical in reference to this its grandest phase.

Before the friends assembled, Mrs. Ford, aforetime an exceedingly sceptical lady, and still a severely critical investigator, said, "As we cannot have your cage test here, I am most anxious to apply one that would be to me, and I think, to other friends also almost as satisfactory, and that is, that Miss Wood go up stairs with me, and allow me to undress and redress her, so that in the event of a form or forms walking out of the cabinet robed in white, we may feel quite assured that the medium took nothing into the cabinet with her, which would account for such an appearance." Miss Wood, when asked by Mrs. Ford if she would submit to such a test, replied: "I have not yet done so, but I am quite willing to do so to-night."

On coming down stairs dressed in Mrs. Ford's dark clothes, she at once entered the cabinet, and was secured to the easy-chair by having tapes stitched round her wrists, which were in turn stitched to the chair, and then nailed to the skirting-board, the stitches on chair and nail being sealed.

The first hour or two spent at one of these seances is pretty much like all first hours so spent, in singing and conversation, tending to create a pleasant and harmonious feeling. It was so this evening. When an hour and a half had passed we were told to lower the light and join hands.

Notwithstanding all I had witnessed during the previous week, I was as deeply interested as anyone present in the success of the test which was then being applied.

Ever since the time when some wild screaming writer in one of the Newcastle papers did his best to strangle Spiritualism by a coarsely written article, referring to a seance held in that neighbourhood, at which a small quantity of white material was found on the person of the medium,

I have been anxious to be present when the phenomena have had to be weighted with that special test. The reply of Mr. Barkas to that coarse production was eminently satisfactory; still, it was with a feeling akin to that of the chemist when the result of his experiment begins to manifest itself, that I saw the curtains move.

In a minute or two afterwards, at the extreme end of the cabinet, there came forth from behind the curtains a form robed in white. It was "Maggie," the beautiful and gentle spirit who had before manifested at Belper. She lingered near the fireplace, leaning on the mantelpiece. The skirt of her snowy white dress fell in ample folds on the floor, while her head, arms, and shoulders were covered with a garment of the same material, which reached to her knees. Seating herself on the ground, she took a musical album which lay near at hand, and, without winding it up, by a method peculiar to those who have dwelt, even for a brief time, amid the higher and diviner harmonies, drew from it strains which its mechanism had certainly not been arranged to give forth. Rising to her feet, as far as her strength would permit, she went from one to another, complying with very earnest requests to be touched. Having asked her if she would write a few lines for Mrs. Ford, she approached and took from me the paper and pencil which had been provided, and, sitting down near a footstool, wrote a short note, which, on rising, she presented to Mrs. Ford—a *souvenir*, in my opinion, quite as precious as the autograph of a queen. With a manifestly faltering step, the spirit slowly retired into the cabinet, when "Pocka" informed us that, for lack of power, nothing more could be done then, adding that dematerialisation had commenced, and "Maggie" had lost a portion of her body before she had got fairly behind the curtains. Thus the gate, which for a moment had stood ajar to permit the enfranchised spirit to bring us greeting from the other side, was closed, and from this, the vestibule of heaven's audience-chamber, we had to find our way back to the ordinary haunts of human life, where still, for how long we know not, in many forms, the results of a misapprehension of the divine economy are destined to strew our path.

On Sunday, February 11th, another seance was held at Mrs. Ford's. As two or three persons were then present who were not in attendance on the Tuesday evening previous, Miss Wood was asked if she would again submit to the



MRS. FORD (NOW MRS. A. SMEDLEY), BELPER.

special test. Without a moment's hesitation she acceded to the request. The change of dress was even more thorough than before, her stockings and boots having been taken off and examined. When she came down stairs my brother led her to the cabinet, and was proceeding to fasten her to the chair as before, when the two sceptical gentlemen referred to as being present at the former seance, advanced towards the cabinet, saying they had an additional test they would like to apply. My brother asked what it was. They declined to say; upon which my brother observed he could not consent to allow them to fasten the medium until he knew what they were going to do.

They then informed him they had brought with them a velvet collar, which they wished to fasten round the medium's neck with a padlock, the collar having a piece of string through it, which they wished to have nailed to the floor and sealed.

This incident occasioned a temporary excitement and inharmony, which caused "Pocka," who held control of the medium, to say she was afraid they could not manifest that evening, and the meeting had better be broken up.

Two or three of the friends left the house, the others remaining to reflect on what had passed—the sceptical feeling, doubtless, that their scepticism had not been lessened, whilst those who were better versed in the philosophy of the occult felt that another practical lesson had been given, setting forth the absolute necessity of giving to those who come to "roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre" the conditions, without which they cannot do their work.

In about half an hour the friends were informed that if they chose to re-arrange themselves in circle, and would preserve harmony, the guides of the medium would try what could be done, adding that they had decided the medium should submit to the additional test which had been suggested. The collar was then placed round the medium's neck and locked, the string being nailed to the floor and sealed.

In a short time my brother was asked to enter the cabinet, when he found the medium's neck so swollen that the collar had to be removed at once. Instead of the lock being again affixed, the collar was stitched round the neck, leaving freedom enough, but still so tight as to make it

impossible to pass it over the head. The part stitched was sealed, after which the collar was sewn to the medium's dress, and the string again nailed and sealed.

After waiting a little longer than the usual time, "Maggie," the spirit who had manifested at the former seance, again walked slowly out of the cabinet. As before, she was robed from head to foot in long, flowing white garments.

Herein lay a triumph greater than had ever been achieved by czar or king when they had brought nations to their feet, for, as one from out the serried ranks of the immortals who are contending for the truth, "Maggie" came, the friends saw, and she conquered, no room being left for doubt as to the genuineness of the manifestation.

The details of the seance need not be dwelt upon; suffice it to say she "showed herself alive by many infallible proofs."

In this age of conflict with, and triumph over, the forces of nature, men may be found who, in their ambition born of success, have come to regard the word impossible, when applied to human ingenuity and skill, as being almost obsolete.

However, notwithstanding all that has been accomplished, there still is, and ever must be, a limit to the possible. For, as in mathematics two and two can never be made into five, so in physics a solid body measuring twelve inches in diameter can never be passed through an opening measuring nine inches; neither can a dark suit of woollen clothes, in the absence of chemical and mechanical appliances, by man's skill and dexterous manipulation be transformed into garments white and soft, rivalling in their texture the productions of the finest looms.

Therefore, when the cabinet was entered, and the medium found dressed in the dark clothes, and bound to the floor by the collar stitched and sealed, all were compelled to admit it was *impossible* the medium could have done what had been done.

I may be reminded of the wonderful transformations and marvellous escapes from bonds exhibited by the professors of legerdemain. I reply—Whole continents of difference lie between *doing* and *seeming* to do, and this is precisely the corner in which conjurers will take very good care not to allow themselves to be fixed. I am pleased to be able to add that at the close of the seance the two sceptical gentlemen referred to, with the greatest frankness, admitted that their test had been complied with, and that they were quite convinced of the honesty of the medium and the genuineness of the phenomena.

## CHAPTER X.

### MISS WOOD'S SECOND WEEK IN BELPER.

Tuesday Night. Influence of a Drunken Man on the Medium. Wednesday. Medium screwed up in Cage, yet Spirit Forms appear. Thursday. "Benny," a Scotchman, and "Bretimo," an Italian, Materialise—Photographic Experiments—Rev. H. R. Haweis on Spiritualism.

It being deemed advisable by the Belper friends to pursue the investigation further, and, if possible, obtain phenomena of a somewhat different character and under other conditions, it was decided to engage Miss Wood to give six additional seances. Finding it would suit her convenience to remain with us, I told her there were three distinct manifestations we were anxious to obtain—first, for the spirit to materialise in the cabinet and come out while the medium sat in the circle; next, for the spirit to materialise outside while the medium was seated in her chair in the cabinet; and the last, to obtain moulds of spirit-hands or feet while the medium was screwed up in the cage. Severe as the tests were, Miss Wood said: "Your conditions are so good I think it is quite possible you may succeed."

After spending a week in Derby, Miss Wood returned to Belper on Tuesday, February 13th. In answer to my inquiry, she said she felt well and quite prepared for the seance in the evening, which we had every reason to expect would be at least a continuation of, if not an improvement upon, our previous successes; but we were destined to prove, as many have proved before, that, as far as spiritual mediumship is concerned, to expect is one thing and to realise your expectations another; for not only was the evening a blank as far as phenomena were concerned, but the medium, in the absence of objective manifestations, was subjected to greater exhaustion than if her vitality had been drawn upon for the production of two or three materialised spirit-forms.

As usual, Miss Wood, on entering the seance-room, went at once into the cage, was bound and sealed to her chair, and the door of the cage screwed up. As I was about to let the curtain drop in front of the cage I observed Miss Wood

lying back in the chair as in a death-swoon. Thinking she was perhaps more deeply entranced than usual, I said nothing. She must have remained in that condition for nearly a quarter of an hour, as not the slightest movement was heard.

Then "Pocka" took control, and informed us the conditions were bad; that in coming to the seance some drunken men had jostled against the medium; that spirits who had been drunkards in earth-life were present, and their influence would prevent any manifestations taking place that evening; that, on being bound, the medium had been controlled by a spirit who had committed suicide by poison, and that she had been injuriously affected by the control; that the cage must be opened and the medium released at once, taken home under control and put to bed. This was done, and she remained under control until a late hour.

Some might say it was an evening lost. Not so; for out of our disappointment grew a lesson often inculcated before, and driven home that night with more than mortal eloquence. Banish the drink from your midst; do what you can to prevent its victims from being sent prematurely, or at all, into the "land of souls"; then will your hours of spirit-communion be secure against such unwelcome visitation.

We were afterwards informed by those who accompanied Miss Wood to the seance that in passing along the street two drunken men rushed from the road on to the pavement, nearly knocking the medium down. This fact, to those who know anything of sensitives and the laws which govern mediumship, will be premiss enough on which to build a theory which will account for the peculiar occurrences of the evening.

On Wednesday, February 14th, in the afternoon, Miss Wood, acting on the advice of her guides, went in company with three friends to the seance-room, had the door and windows open to promote ventilation, and then sat for about an hour in the cage.

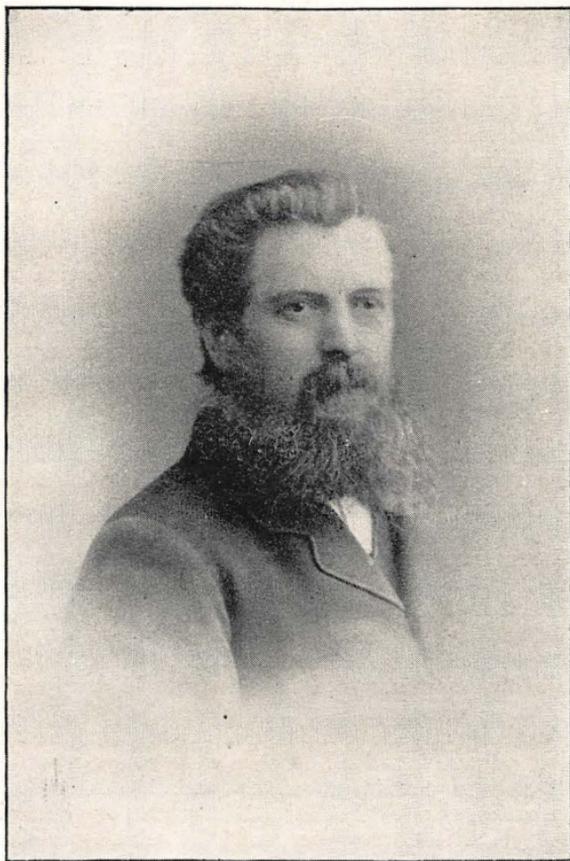
In the evening we met as usual. Twenty persons were present. The medium was secured as before and cage screwed up. Although the conditions were greatly improved, we were informed that the medium had not altogether recovered from the bad influences of the evening before, but as the medium's own band had full control they hoped to be able to manifest. We were exhorted to be

as passive as possible, and thus aid those who were working on the other side. But, after doing their best, they found they were not equal to the conditions which had been imposed, for "Pocka" informed us they would not be able to materialise with the cage door fast. It was, therefore, opened a few inches and the table placed against it. After singing for some time with more than our usual vigour, in order to help the conditions, the beautiful and gentle spirit, "Maggie," came out of the cabinet. In all respects her appearance answered the descriptions already given of her, save that the robe seemed of a more dazzling whiteness. I felt, and I think everyone present felt, that her magnetism was a baptism of sweet influences; her every movement betokened the gentleness and refinement of her nature, and every act she was able to perform her deep sympathy and love. Approaching Master Edwin Smedley, she took him up in her arms, carried him back to the cabinet, kissed him, and then replaced him in his chair. Whether in doing so she had over-taxed her powers, I know not, but immediately after it came to pass that, as she stood against the dark curtains, a great change took place in her appearance; it was as if the rays of the sun had suddenly been brought to bear upon a pile of snow. She seemed to be melting away. I exclaimed: "See! The form is dematerialising." Having decreased about two feet in height and proportionately in breadth, the process stopped, and gradually the form rose again into its former proportions. Coming away from the cabinet, I offered her my hand, which she took. I then asked if she would kindly write a few lines, when, taking the pencil and paper from me, she bent over the table and wrote:—

"My dear Friends,—I have got a little more power, I am very glad to be with you once more; go on in your good work, and I will help you all I can. Good night. MAGGIE."

She then retired, and the veil which hides the shining ones from our sight dropped between the two worlds.

After singing another hymn, "Pocka" informed us that "Bretimo," an Italian spirit, and the principal guide of Mr. T. Brown, of Howden-le-Wear, had been trying to materialise, but found he would not be able to do so then; he would try again to-morrow evening, and hoped to be more successful. She further told us we must sit on Thursday for the cage test, on Friday for materialisation in



MR. JAMES SMEDLEY,  
*Of Smedley Bros., Belper.*

the cabinet with medium in the circle, on Saturday for materialisation outside with medium in the cabinet, and on Sunday morning for spirit-moulds.

[“What will it be necessary for us to prepare for making the moulds?” I asked.

“Benny say ’ou must provide two pails of water, one of cold and one of hot; and a pound of wax,” she replied.

“What kind of wax?” I asked.

“Benny say white wax, such as ’ou mother use for waxing her sewing thread,” she replied.—A.S.]

I think it will not be out of place here to say, that while in Belper recently, Mr. Brown, under his guide “Bretimo,” delivered several addresses, which, for deep insight into human nature, fine philosophic thought, robust common sense, and glowing descriptions of “Life beyond the Grave,” I have seldom heard equalled.

On Thursday evening, February 15th, we met again. The circle was a large and a most harmonious one, and as we were about to carry out the instructions of the spirits, we determined, in perfect accord with the earnestly expressed wish of the medium, to make “assurance doubly sure;” she remarking again, “If you obtain phenomena you will get them under the double test.” She was therefore so secured to the chair and the floor, had the cage door been open the test would have been a good one; however, to make it absolutely impossible for the medium to show even a hand, the cage door was screwed up, the curtain dropped before, and the table placed against it.

The seance proved to be a grand one, the best I ever attended or have heard of. There were twenty-two persons present, and the conditions all that could be desired.

For about an hour “Pocka” sang for, and chatted with us; she made the time pass pleasantly by relating, in her own inimitable style, portions of her experience with other investigators; in asking questions which were sometimes difficult to answer, and in discoursing, not only sensibly, but philosophically, on subjects which have often puzzled older and more pretentious students. We were then told to lower the light a little, join hands, and sing. We had not long to wait before the curtains opened and “Benny” walked out. He appeared to have considerable power, his form was erect,

and his step firm. I offered him an apple; he at once stretched out his hand and took it; he was heard to bite a piece out of it; walking close up to me, he placed the piece in my mouth. In this manner the apple was divided into about six pieces, which were in succession placed in the mouths of as many different persons. A friend gave him a biscuit, which he brought and placed in my mouth; another gave him an orange, with his teeth he tore the rind off, and dividing it into a good many parts, gave a portion to such as were within reach, until all were disposed of. Then, in response to numerous requests, "Benny" walked close up to the front circle, and stretching forth his hand, permitted those behind to touch or shake it.

After performing various vigorous movements to prove his physical strength, during which the floor shook, he retired.

Not much time passed before the curtains opened again, and there stood between them a form robed in white, not so tall as "Benny," but broader in the chest. The spirit seemed timid, and did not advance beyond the curtains. Having been told that he would materialise if possible, I said, "Is it 'Bretimo'?" The head was bowed in response.

Miss Saunders, a young lady sitting on my left, said, "If it is 'Bretimo,' be kind enough to give the test you promised." Immediately, the spirit in a deep sonorous voice said, "Good morning"—his usual salutation when about to give an address through his medium, Mr. Brown. "Quite right," said Miss Saunders, upon which the form retired.

We were then informed that about a week previously Mr. Brown was controlled by "Bretimo," who told Mr. Wheeldon, Mrs. Wheeldon, and Miss Saunders, the only persons present, that he hoped to be able to materialise through Miss Wood's mediumship, and that if he did, he would give them one or two tests; if possible, he would say, "Good morning"; if he could not speak he would knock six times. The first test being the most satisfactory we were delighted to receive it.

Then came "Pocka," the intelligent, light-hearted Indian girl. She had much more power than when she manifested before. We were deeply interested by her efforts to sustain a conversation. The voice was pitched low, and yet sharp, and was without the slightest modulation. I at once recognised it as the same I had heard at a seance given by Misses Wood and Fairlamb (two names that should always have been linked together as far as their connection with Spiritualism is concerned) at 15, Southampton Row. I also soon discerned

the general movements of the little psychic to be similar to those of the tiny spirit-form which allowed Mrs. Everitt, at the seance in question, to go and sit down beside the curtains and caress her; "Pocka" taking from Mrs. Everitt her parasol, with which she playfully struck those immediately around her.

The contrast in point of size between "Pocka" and "Benny" was most remarkable. The outline of the robed figure clearly proved that the form stood erect, and when, reaching forth my hand, I asked her to kiss it, the little head was bent forward, and the warm lips pressed upon it, in addition to which, for a few minutes, she jumped about, proving she had the free and unconstrained use of arms and legs; and all this while the medium was screwed up in the cage, and sealed in the chair.

For the medium to liberate herself from her bondage, and place herself in such a position that, had she the necessary skill and appliances, she could represent the different forms we had looked upon, and then return to the condition in which we left her—the cage, tapes, and seals being found as when the seance commenced—would, to me, be almost as great a marvel as anything else which could be done. Indeed, so profoundly impressed am I with the impossibility of this being done, that unless those who have boasted that it is their mission to stamp out the "imposture of Spiritualism," of "their great charity," are moved to take the scales from our eyes, I have to say, I am prepared to write a cheque for two hundred and fifty guineas, and my friend, Mr. A. Smedley, will write one for a similar amount, and the FIVE HUNDRED GUINEAS shall at once be paid to any person who will, under similar conditions to those described above, produce phenomena which shall in all respects be like those of which I have just spoken, and so distinctly explain the method by which they are produced that the person to whom the method is made known, or any other person or persons to whom, in turn, the said method may be made known, will be able at any time, or in any place, to produce exactly the same kind of phenomena as those which appeared when Miss Wood was screwed up in the cage. If, as is claimed, the marvels are simply clever conjuring, the above conditions will not be regarded as too stringent. It is also to be understood that those who accept this challenge forfeit a like sum in the event of failing to produce the phenomena under the conditions named above.

Neither I nor my friend have any great liking for challenges of this description. We make the offer simply to prove our confidence in what we believe to be the truth, and our willingness, should we be the subjects of delusion or imposture, to pay handsomely for having our eyes opened.

At the close of the seance the heavy drugget which hung before the cage door had to be removed, and the screw-driver brought into requisition before the medium could be released. She was found entranced, and the tape and seals intact.

On the following morning, Friday, Feb. 16th, I accompanied Miss Wood to the photographic studio of Mr. Booth, in this town, for the purpose of trying to obtain a spirit-picture of "Pocka." Miss Wood sat two or three times without success. I then suggested that it might make a difference if the medium was the operator. Miss Wood placing her hands upon a book, "Pocka" was asked if it would; three raps were immediately given. Encouraged by this reply, Miss Wood, instructed by Mr. Graham, the manager, proceeded to clean a plate, she then collodionised it, placed it in the bath, and when ready, in the carrier and camera.

I sat for my likeness. Before the plate was taken into the developing room, "Pocka" was asked if she had done anything, she rapped, "Yes." This we could scarcely believe; however, on opening the carrier, there were marks on the plate, as if two fingers had been drawn across the film, removing it, and gathering it into a layer near the edge of the plate. The plate was placed in a repeating back camera. In the picture on the side where the film was disturbed, my right leg was almost invisible, being veiled in a dense aura or fog, while the picture on the other side is perfectly distinct and clear.

Another plate was prepared by Miss Wood, and treated in all respects like the former one, with a similar result.

While the third plate was being cleaned by Miss Wood, Mr. Booth, the proprietor of the studio, and a sceptic came in; the two plates were shown to him, and it was explained how the marks had been obtained. With evident interest, he watched Miss Wood's movements, until he saw the plate placed in the carrier, without a mark of any kind upon it. After the portrait had been taken, and before the plate was removed from the camera, "Pocka" was asked if she had done anything, she rapped, "Yes." Have you scratched the

film? She rapped, "Yes." Mr. Booth, Mr. Graham, and myself went into the developing room, and on opening the carrier, we found that a portion of the film had been removed as if by a finger having been placed flatly upon the plate, and drawn upwards. Mr. Booth looked very much astonished. I asked him if he could offer any explanation. He replied: "I know of nothing that will explain it."

A fourth plate was prepared, and treated in precisely the same way, and before it was removed from the camera, the question was again asked if anything had been done. "Pocka" rapped out "No." On opening the carrier, the plate was found as free from marks as when placed in it.

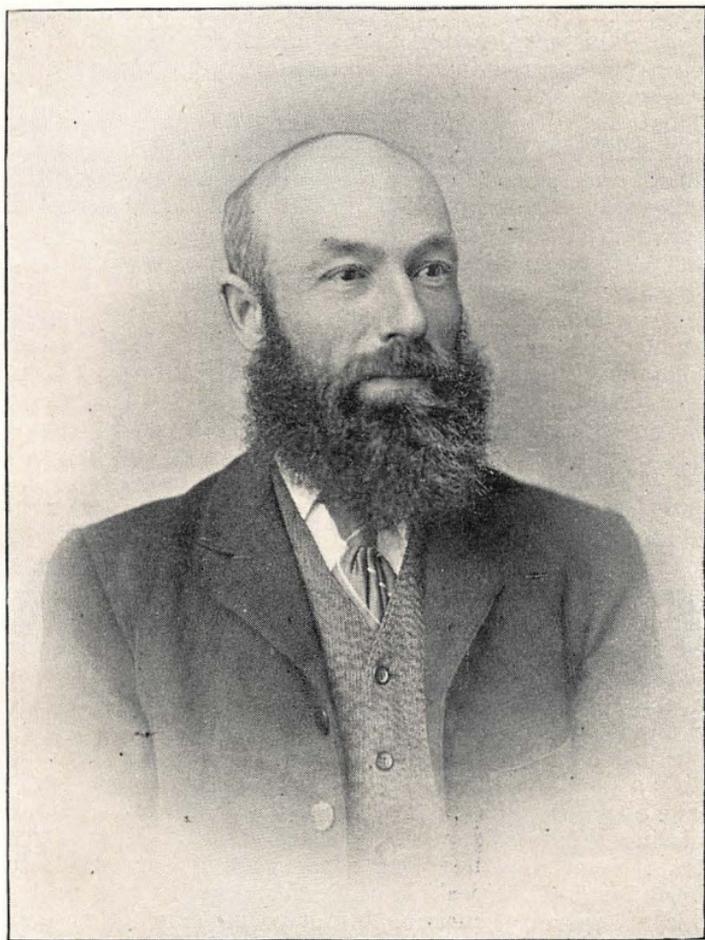
Altogether twenty-one plates were prepared and operated upon. On five of these there were no marks, and in every instance before the plate was removed from the camera, we were told that nothing had been done; on the remainder there were marks of one kind or another, and in every instance, before the plate was removed from the camera, we were told by raps that something had been done.

When the tenth plate had been prepared, and placed in the camera, I suggested it might be well to apply an additional test; I therefore asked "Pocka" if she would make a mark down the plate, and then across it; she rapped, she would try. Before the plate was removed from the camera, she was asked if she had done so, she rapped, "No." Have you done anything? "Yes." On opening the carrier it was found that a broad piece of the film had been drawn down the centre of the plate, and a little on one side, a patch of the film had been removed, as if a finger had been planted there for the purpose of drawing it across, but had not been able to do so.

When the eleventh plate had been prepared she was again asked to try and make the mark down the plate and across. Before the plate was removed from the camera she was asked if she had done so. She rapped "Yes"; and, sure enough, on the carrier being opened, there was the mark I had asked her to produce. This experiment was successfully repeated on the twenty-first plate.

In connection with the eighteenth plate the results were most remarkable. In all respects it was treated as the others.

Our postmaster, Mr. Sowray, sat for his likeness. On inquiring, we were told something had been done. On development, there was seen to be a dark mass resting



MR. A. BODELL, BELPER.

on Mr. Sowray's knee and covering the whole of the right side of his person. It was not sufficiently defined to enable us to say what it was.

We were told to put the plate in the camera again, just as it was. On withdrawing it, we found the dark mass had been taken out and instead there appeared the rude profile of a negro face.

This was, perhaps, the most extraordinary piece of work which had been done, inasmuch as the outline had been as clearly and sharply cut as though it had been executed by a fine-pointed instrument. Miss Wood stood close to Mr. Sowray while this picture was taken. Three gentlemen who were present during a portion of the time in which these interesting experiments were being conducted, and who knew little or nothing of Spiritualism, were thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, so self-evident was it that an intelligent power had been at work under conditions which ruled out the possibility of imposture. To say nothing of the work done, and a portion of it done as desired, upon what theory other than the spiritual can it be explained that twenty-one correct answers were given to as many questions having reference to facts which did not then lie, and never at any previous time had lain, within the knowledge either of the medium or any other human being. During the whole time Miss Wood was in her normal state.

Dr. Carpenter's "Dried Peas" are of no use here. The theories of psychic and odylic force, as commonly understood, appear to be equally at fault. If by any subtle rendering the information communicated can be referred to the mind of any human being then present the fact ought to be proved, for hitherto psychologists have been working within a line beyond which these phenomena seem to lie.

The above would appear to supply in one form at least the "missing link" desiderated by the Rev. H. R. Haweis in an extract from his new book entitled, "Current Coin," pages 46 and 47. Speaking of Spiritualism, he says:—

"The important question is not so much whether or no the thing looks trivial, or whether or no the dead are trying to communicate (although of course that is important), but whether the phenomena witnessed prove the possibility of intelligence of some kind, human or otherwise, living and acting upon matter, without the brain and nervous system declared by physiologists to be indispensable to the very existence of any intelligence.

“This is the real reason why Modern Spiritualism cannot get a hearing with most scientific men.

“The latest position of science is, that mind itself is the product of matter and force organised in such a system as man’s. Without such a material nervous system, mind, it is repeated *ad nauseam*, cannot exist, much less manifest itself. Modern Spiritualism affects to supply direct evidence to the contrary.

“It offers to produce intelligence of some kind acting upon matter, and yet unconnected with a brain and a nervous system. If this could be proved, the materialist argument would at once fall ; for if intelligence similar to ours exists, and can operate outside the usual organised conditions, our souls *may*—we do not say *must*—do the same. God is conceivable, and intelligence ceases to be the mere product of force and matter specially organised.”

The experiment is worth repeating, for if mediums can be found, through whom the same results can be obtained, a quick and ready method of carrying conviction to the minds of the most sceptical may be established, and proof of immortality be adduced which neither theology, law, nor science can gainsay.



## CHAPTER XI.

Materialisation with Medium in the Circle—Vigorous Appetite of Medium when under Control—Spirit Form grows up to Full Stature before their eyes—Spirit cuts off a portion of his Whiskers—"Benny" Catechised—Spirit Dematerialises in Full View—"Pocka" Materialises—Her warm Breath and perfect Teeth—"Benny" and "Maggie" make Paraffin Wax Moulds of their Feet—"Benny's" "Sarmon on Immortality."

[*From the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK, March 30.*]

In pursuance of instructions received, our circle met again on Friday evening, for the purpose of trying to obtain the marvellous phenomenon of a materialised spirit-form walking out of the cabinet while the medium was outside in the circle. The attendance was large, above thirty persons being present. Miss Wood entered the cabinet immediately on her arrival, and sat on an easy-chair unbound.

In some of its features this was the most remarkable seance I ever attended. In addition to Miss Wood, there were six other mediums present, and these were controlled and exercised so violently, the perspiration stood in beads on their brows. After chatting and singing for about an hour, the medium, under control, walked out of the cabinet, and sat on a chair close to the front circle.

For about ten minutes "Pocka" chatted with us as merrily as during the former part of the seance; then came a change. Gradually the voice became weaker, the speech slower. In tones somewhat like those of a peevish child, the control said: "Me hungry; me want something to eat." Immediately pockets were searched for anything in the shape of food. An apple was placed in the hand of the medium; this was devoured at once; another apple was despatched as quickly. Then some biscuits and an orange were given to her, but these failed to satisfy, for the plaintive cry still came from the lips of the medium, "Me hungry; me want something to eat." On being told we had nothing more to give, she seemed much distressed, and in still fainter tones said, "If me don't have something to eat me die, and you put me in de grave again."

For a few minutes she was quieter, during which time the curtains were seen to divide at the bottom, and a white mass appeared. It was seen for a minute, and then the curtains closed. Again it appeared, this time showing in larger proportions. The curtains closed once more.

The medium, who had been moaning in a most piteous manner, again said: "Me hungry; me want something to eat." On being reminded we had nothing to give her, and further told that as soon as the seance was over a supply of food would be brought to her, she replied: "If me no get something to eat, me die, and you have to put me in de grave again."

Scarcely had she finished the sentence before she rose from her chair, and, approaching the table against which I sat, snatched at something which had evidently attracted her attention, which proved to be an article said to be relished as food by the dwellers in more northern climes, and before she could be prevented, had placed it in her mouth and swallowed it. I laid my hand upon hers and felt it to almost as cold as ice.

She resumed her seat, and became a little quieter. Again the curtains were divided, the opening being higher and wider than before, the height and width being indicated by the white substance showing behind.

These movements alternated with greater or less rapidity until the full height, but not the full breadth, of the spirit-form stood revealed.

I invited the spirit to come out from behind the curtains, but there seemed to be a lack of power. However, as if to convince us the question had been apprehended, and, had the power existed, would have been complied with, the spirit, with a sweep of the leg, projected the long, flowing, and dazzling white robes we had been looking upon, a considerable distance across the floor. I felt this to be a critical moment—the moment when it must be decided whether those beautiful garments covered a materialised spirit-form or whether the glorious vision was purely subjective. These were the only questions to be answered, as the medium sat before us dressed in dark clothes.

I therefore, stretching my hand as far towards the curtains as possible, asked that the hand of the spirit might be laid on mine. Apparently a slight effort was necessary to do this, but it was accomplished, the hand was laid upon mine; the fingers, unlike those of the medium, were large, fleshy, and warm.

The fact was therefore demonstrated that while the medium sat in her chair, controlled by an intelligence that in most beseeching but subdued accents craved for food, there stood before us another intelligence not so influenced, and one who could not only comprehend the request which had been preferred, but could also govern the functions of the material body which had been taken on, so that the request might be granted in the manner desired.

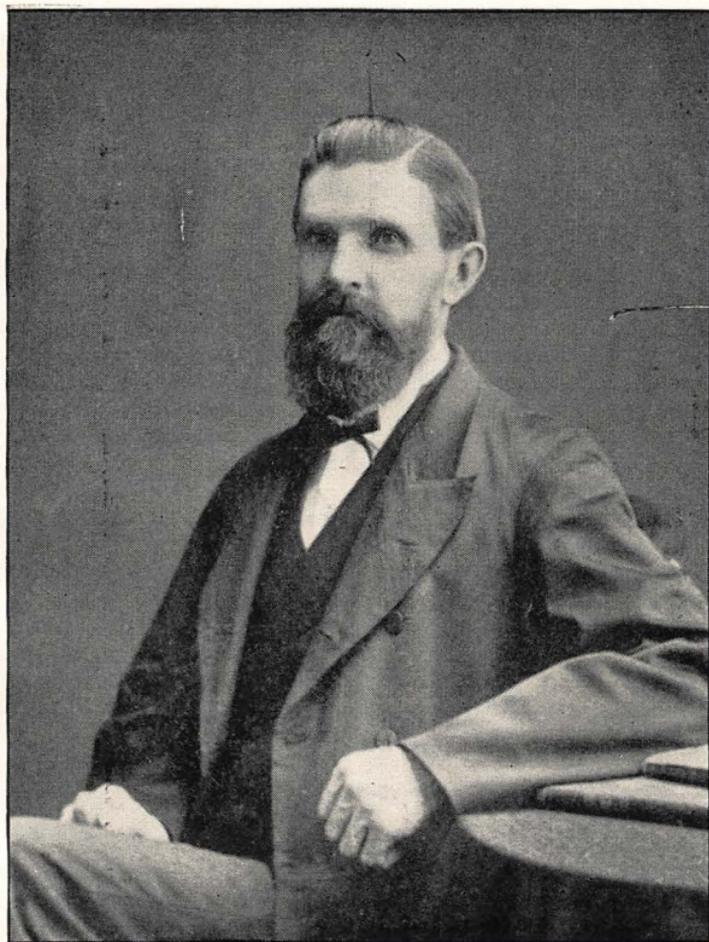
If it be objected that the sense of touch, equally with the sense of sight, might be at fault, I have to say that if I did not then feel a warm, solid hand laid on mine I never did ; for in order to prove whether at that moment I was or was not the slave of a "dominant idea," I severely examined myself, and felt quite assured that my right hand had not lost its cunning, but it was sufficiently sensitive and facile, and my judgment sufficiently well balanced to enable me to draw a bill of exchange, sign a deed of conveyance, or do any other special act, the right doing of which requires the harmonious action of the powers of body and mind.

Mrs. H. Wheeldon informs me that after the seance was over two plates of cake and bread and butter were brought into the room and quickly eaten by the medium—still under control—she, while doing so, covering the food with her arm, lest any portion of it should be taken from her.

I should be glad to know what relation, if any, this singular craving for food bears to the manifestations obtained, the medium, in her normal condition, being abstemious and altogether undemonstrative.

On Saturday evening, February 17th, with interest unabated, a large circle assembled, hoping to witness what is, perhaps, all things considered, the most astounding phase of spiritual phenomena—that of the spirit-form being built up and dematerialised in the presence of the lookers-on.

As the second series of seances drew to a close, the testimony in favour of man's immortality became cumulative to a degree exceeding far our utmost expectations ; for those who were then present were privileged to look upon a sight surpassing in all that makes a thing marvellous, that upon which Manoah looked when, "as the flame went up from off the altar, the angel of the Lord, with whom he had been conversing, ascended in the flame of the altar," for not only did our heavenly visitant vanish from our sight, gradually disappearing until there was no trace of his presence left, but from a spot of white there grew within the



THE LATE MR. SAML. SMEDLEY,  
*Of Smedley Bros., Belper.*

sphere of our actual observation a form, the solidity and structural perfection of whose parts were testified to by our senses of sight, feeling, hearing, and, I may add, taste. Although it might seem unnecessary, in view of this special manifestation, the medium was secured by being stitched and sealed in the chair and to the floor as before.

The cabinet with its immediate surroundings was subjected to a thorough examination, and everything pronounced quite satisfactory, one of the examiners being a gentleman who had not been present at any previous seance.

I occupied my old position in front of the cage door, and close to the cabinet, Mr. A. Smedley being my *vis-à-vis*, that is to say that he sat close to the cabinet at the other end, indeed so close he could at any moment, if so disposed, observe all that occurred on either side of the curtains; so that it was quite impossible for a form, either human or extemporised, to pass from or into the cabinet without his knowledge.

He made careful notes of all that occurred, and I am happy to find from their perusal that his observations are entirely confirmatory of my own experience, and I am sure of that of all present.

When "Pocka" took control she was not long in opening one of her favourite batteries.

To puzzle those supposed to be knowing ones, by asking questions which they failed to answer correctly, appeared to afford her great pleasure. The experiment was tried to-night on a good old Wesleyan friend, on a subject connected with New Testament history, when it was found he had either forgotten his catechism or been caught napping. The result was all the same, "Pocka" fairly roared with delight.

Thus pleasantly sped the time for more than an hour, when, as might be expected, we were delighted to hear "Pocka" say "'Benny' peaks, him tink him able to 'terialise outside cabinet, sing for your lives"; which we did with a will, and continued to do for about twenty minutes, when several of the friends together said, "There is something white lying on the floor outside the curtains." It appeared to Mr. Smedley, myself, and others about the size of a shilling. It so remained for a minute or two, then the bulk increased, but so indefinite was it in shape, it was difficult to think of anything with which to compare it. When it had attained about eighteen inches in height, its development stopped for a minute or two: then its proportions again steadily increased. Dividing lines appeared, shading off into what might be the rudiments

of a robe. A minute or two more, and the change was such as to lead a lady sitting near me to say, "I believe it is 'Pocka.'" I replied, "We must wait a little longer, as the form is not yet developed." And I was right, for it continued to rise and broaden, like nothing so much (except that the process was quicker) as a flower opening its petals to the sun, until "Benny" stood before us, so perfect and complete as to justify us in saying, in the language of two of our finest representative poets—

"And the grave is not the goal."

"A man's a man for a' that."

"Benny" was soon at work. Having bowed to the company, he laid his hand on Mr. Smedley's head, pressing it rather heavily, and then stroked his face.

Mr. Smedley took his hand, which he says was much larger than his own and double the size of the medium's. He appeared to be more thoroughly *en rapport* with the circle than on any previous occasion, doing his best to reach circumference as well as centre, to convince all that he was something more substantial than the ghost which is for ever dogging a murderer's steps.

In consequence, I presume, of having acquired either more confidence or power, he did not wrap himself in his robe so closely as usual; it was well thrown back from his face and off his hands.

Producing a pair of scissors, I asked "Benny" if he would oblige me by giving me a portion of his whisker. Instead of either bowing or shaking his head, I was delighted to hear him answer, in good honest Scotch, "Aye." He took the scissors, and I saw him cut from his face a portion of his whisker, which he gave to me, and which is now in my possession.

["Benny, did you learn your catechism when a boy?" I asked.

"Yes, I did," he answered. "Why do you ask?"

"Well I would like to ask you one of the questions, viz.: Who made you?"

"If you mean this material body," he replied, pointing to his chest, "I made myself."

"Where did you get the material from to make it?" I asked.

"I got some from you and other members of the circle, some from the atmosphere, and some from the medium, but it all came through the medium," he answered.

“Can any spirit materialise a body if conditions are provided?” I asked.

“No; not till they’ve learned to do so. We have all to learn on this side, just the same as you have,” he replied.

“When in London, at one of Mr. Williams’ seances, ‘John King’ appeared, with only the upper portion of his body materialised. I should have thought that, given the knowledge and power to materialise, the whole body must have been equally developed?” I remarked.

“No; that’s not so. When a spirit has learned the art of materialisation, and conditions are good, he can materialise any part of a body that he wishes, just as the hand was made that wrote the hand-writing on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast,” he replied.—A.S.]

This was the first occasion on which he had spoken to us when materialised, and very much we enjoyed the northern twang. He chatted with us about ten minutes, during which time he busied himself in dividing, as before, certain apples and oranges which were given to him for that purpose.

Then the time of his departure drew near, and his exit was certainly in all respects as wonderful as his advent.

To liken his going to the sun dipping below the horizon would not be correct. A better idea of the phenomenon might be obtained by having a figure made of wax placed near a good fire, so that every part of the figure might be brought within the action of the increased temperature. But there would be this essential difference between the two things—that, whereas when the figure of wax was completely dissolved, the material might be gathered up and remodelled, in the case of “Benny” the dematerialisation was so complete as not to leave a vestige of anything to tell either of what he was made or where he had gone. Measuring his full height against the curtains of the cabinet, he stood before us a man of as fine proportions as any in the room.

As his white robes stood out, strongly relieved by the dark background, we were able to note distinctly, inch by inch, the lessening of the form, until there lay on the floor what appeared to be a piece of white material about as large as a pocket handkerchief, and eventually even that gradually disappeared; but in that form it certainly did not pass into the cabinet, for Mr. Smedley, who had charged himself with the special duty of observing whether or not dematerialisation

was completely effected outside the cabinet, affirms that not a single particle of the white substance he had been looking at passed behind the curtains in that form.

How marvellous are Thy works, O, God ! Think of it as we may, believe it or not, this also is a part of the Divine plan, the result of law ever existent, though held in abeyance. How profound and far-reaching those provisions of the Divine wisdom and love, which find their truest interpretation in the highest development of the human race.

Compare the search amongst the "Vestiges of Creation," for proof of the existence of extinct forms of life, with the study of the sublime mystery, upon the mere fringe of which we had just been permitted to look ; and a mystery almost as great is evolved that men of high culture and great mental grasp should almost exclusively expend upon the mere genesis of things the time, strength, and thought which would carry them on to the advanced positions of fact and truth, where the possibilities of humanity would lie before them in the pure, serene light of God's own existence.

Then "Pocka" paid her farewell visit. Her appearance, contrasting strongly, as it did, with that of "Benny," placed the phenomenon of materialisation before two or three persons who had not witnessed it before in a stronger light. She was very lively, her movements free and unconstrained, so that we could better judge of her appearance and build than ever before.

At my request, she came and kissed my hand ; and Mr. Smedley, in his notes, says :—

"I asked her if she would give me a piece of her robe. She answered, 'No.' I asked if she would lay hold of my finger. She said 'Es,' and took it in her little hand, holding it for a few seconds. I then said, 'You must have a tongue, Pocka ; you can talk. I wonder if you have any teeth ?' She at once took hold of my hand and put one of my fingers in her mouth and pressed it between her teeth, which, to the touch, were as perfect as teeth could be, her warm breath being also felt by me whilst my finger was in her mouth." Mr. Smedley then adds, not without reason : "Of course, Mr. Edlin, the assistant-judge, *knows* that spirits *cannot* come back from the other world, because prejudice says they cannot. But we say they *can*, because we have seen, felt, and conversed with them. Many of our children have done the same, and are, therefore, wiser in this respect than many of our professors and judges." So ended

this memorable seance, and at the conclusion the medium was found in the cabinet entranced, and as firmly secured as when we left her.

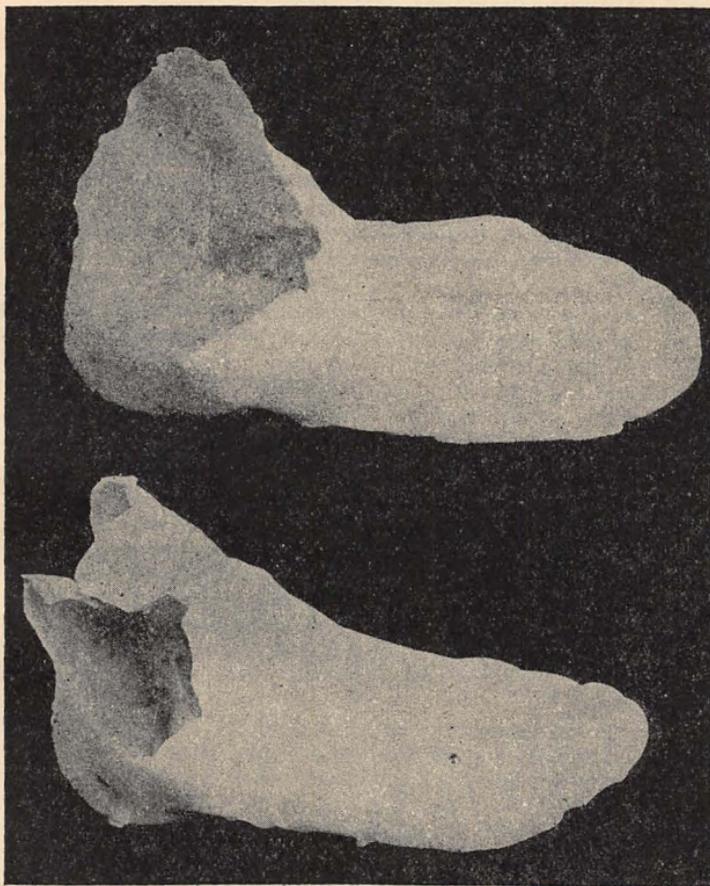
At the two last seances in which special tests had been applied were successful, we were encouraged to hope that in conducting our third and last experiment we might be equally fortunate.

Therefore, on Sunday morning, February 18th, precisely at the hour when thousands of persons in different parts of the country had met to listen to wordy, and in many cases baseless, speculations about immortality—at all events to statements unsupported by direct and positive evidence—our circle met for the purpose of trying to prove it, and to obtain the proof in a form which neither sophistry, prejudice, nor persecution would be able to overturn. We reckoned that if in the past angels had trod our earth, and if to-day our ascended friends, like Moses and Elias, can return for a brief time to the scene of their earthly pilgrimage, it were, perchance, possible that they could leave behind them, as memorials of their visit, *footprints*, stamped not on the “sands of time,” which the beating surf of daily life might soon obliterate, but impressed on a substance which for long years to come would hold in sacred keeping the precious trust. If this could be done, and these memorials placed where the eye of the man who, perhaps, for the best part of his life had been tossed on a sea of conjecture, doubt, and despair in reference to a future existence, might fall upon them, and they become to him a true and bright Apocalypse,—what a fresh and stirring significance would be given to the beautiful lines of the poet, when we could speak of them as

Footsteps which perhaps another  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

In America, through the mediumship of Mrs. Hardy, spirit-moulds have been obtained under test conditions, sceptics themselves being the judges. The moulds were produced inside a wire cage securely fastened, while the medium sat at a distance from it. In making our experiment we proposed to reverse the American method by placing the medium in the cage, and having the moulds produced outside.

It was carefully noted that when Miss Wood entered the seance room she had nothing in her hands. Divesting



PARAFFIN WAX MOULDS OF MATERIALISED SPIRITS' FEET.

herself of her jacket, she at once entered the cage, and was secured to the chair as before, which could not have been done without completely crushing articles so fragile as spirit-moulds, had she any such about her person. The cage door was then screwed up.

Two pails having been provided, a pound of paraffin wax was cut into small pieces, and placed in one of the pails; into this pail was poured boiling water until it was three-parts full, and into the other pail an equal quantity of cold water. The pails were then placed in the cabinet about twelve inches from the side of the cage.

We were then informed that in order to accomplish their purpose it would be necessary to open the cage door a few inches.

The screws were taken out, and an opening made, through which a very small baby could not have been passed, the table being placed against the door as before. We were not kept long in doubt as to the character of the manifestations; and in the manifestations that were given to us we had, I think at least, a very strong intimation that, when the best mental and physical conditions are offered to the spirits, they, on their part, to the extent of their knowledge and power, will work, to make the demonstration as complete as can be secured by our best devised tests. The old proverb, "seeing is believing" was on this occasion fitly and beautifully illustrated. We had not asked to *see* spirit-moulds made; we professed to be content if we found them in the cabinet while the medium was secured in the cage, an experience, which has not hitherto, I believe, been improved upon.

But the workers on the other side,—doubtless arguing, just as logically as we should on this, that if one person sitting close to another saw that other put a boot on his foot and pull it off again, it would be exceedingly difficult for that person not to believe he had seen the thing done—addressed themselves to the task of MAKING SPIRIT-MOULDS BEFORE OUR EYES.

[Being seated, we commenced to sing a hymn, when "Pocka" called out—

"Mr. Smedley, come inside the cabinet."

I immediately passed behind the curtains, and, looking into the cage, I could not see either medium or chair, but instead "a pillar of cloud."

“What do you wish me to do?” I asked.

A voice from the midst of the cloud answered, “You must take the pails out; ‘Benny’ say he’s going to try and make the moulds outside the cabinet, so that you can all see them made. Won’t you like that better?”

“Yes; very much,” I replied.

When moving the pails I dipped my finger into the hot water, and found the wax was melted and floating on the top; a coating of it remained on my finger till it was washed off at home with hot water, soap, and brush.

As soon as the pails were put in the centre of the circle we commenced to sing, and when singing the second hymn the curtains were opened by “Benny,” who stepped out, laid his right hand heavily on my left shoulder, and said, “Good morning to ye all.”

“Good morning, ‘Benny.’ How do you find the conditions?” was asked.

“Oh, very good; please let me have the loan of your chair,” he answered.

I handed him my chair, which he placed close to the pails, his back being about a foot clear of the curtains. When he was seated, he gathered up his white robe and commenced in a vigorous and business-like way to dip his left foot first in the hot and then in the cold pail alternately, for about ten times; then placing his left leg over his right knee, he gently tapped the waxed foot all round, and, taking off a beautiful wax mould, held it up so that all could see it, and then handed it to Mr. Adshead, who said—

“Oh, thank you, ‘Benny.’”

I said, “‘Benny,’ I suppose you are a good Scotchman; are you not breaking the Sabbath by making moulds to-day?” To which he at once replied—

“Eh, mon! ye’re havin’ sich a sarmon on the ‘Immortality of the Soul’ as they’ll nae get in any of the kirks to-day!”

“Hear! hear!! Well done, ‘Benny,’” called out several of the friends.—A.S.]

“Benny,” remembering he had asked that the cage door might be partially opened, and anxious that this concession should not in any respect diminish the completeness of the test under which the moulds had been obtained, undertook in his own way to convince us that the medium was not in any sense an active participant in the work which had been done.

Therefore, approaching the cage door he closed it, and pushed the table up closely against it ; he then took my right arm in both his hands, and pressed it firmly on the table, as much as to say, " You take care it does not move an inch," which duty I faithfully discharged.

Stooping down, he drew the musical box from beneath the table, and, carrying it towards the cage door, placed it on one end on the floor, the other end leaning against the door, the position of the box then being such that had the door been opened, the box must have been thrown backwards.

He then replaced the chair in its former position, and, after shaking hands and conversing with those around him, he bid us adieu and retired within the curtains.

[We were all excitement directly, and were leaving our seats to examine the mould, when " Benny " opened the curtains again and said—

" What's to do now ; why are ye all so excited ? "

" We thought the seance was over," I replied.

" No, no ; all sit down ; be very quiet and sing again, an' we'll try an' send a wee lassie out to make a mould of her foot—ye'll then see the difference between the two," said " Benny."

After taking our seats again and singing for a short time, the curtains opened and " Maggie," a beautiful female form in snow-white robes, stepped gently out, and, after bowing gracefully, pointed to my chair, which I placed close to the pails. " Maggie " seated herself, and, gathering up her long robes, pursued the same course that " Benny " had done, dipping her left foot alternately in the hot and cold water, until the work was finished, when she handed a beautiful mould of her foot to Mr. Adshead. " Maggie " essayed to repeat the experiment with her right foot, but after dipping it two or three times, in consequence, I presume, of her power failing, she rose from her seat, bowed very politely, went into the cabinet, and did not return.—A.S.]

The whole process, from the first dip to the finished mould, was distinctly seen, and the fact that they were made as stated rests on as good evidence as can be offered for the shining of the sun, or the falling of snow.

Had there been a lingering suspicion in the mind of anyone present that the medium by some " subtle device or otherwise "—for in this case we could not speak of " palmistry"—had

managed to present us with an impression of her own little foot, it was destined to be for ever destroyed the moment "Benny," at my request, placed in my hand the mould we saw him take from his foot.

It will thus be seen, when I state that the table never moved, and that at the close of the seance the musical box was found resting against the cage door, and the medium inside the cage entranced and secured to the chair, that the moulds were given to us under a test as absolute as though the cage door had been screwed up. But supposing the cage test had been less complete than it was, we are confronted by other difficulties which require explanation. In the first place, as a rule individuals have not two left feet, but the moulds we got were both taken from left feet; and again the anatomical structure and proportions of both right and left foot in most individuals is so much alike the shoemaker finds it enough for his purpose to measure one; but I find the outside measurement of the mould taken from "Benny's" foot is nine inches in length and four in breadth, while that taken from "Maggie's" foot is eight inches in length and two and a quarter in breadth. Again, the cabinet was so surrounded and watched on every side, by no conceivable possibility could a human being introduce himself or herself without instant detection; whilst at the close of the seance, when an article of some kind was asked for in which to place the moulds for conveyance to my house, nothing could be found, not even a sheet of paper could be had, until one large enough for the purpose was brought from a friend's house. I ask, then, if the moulds of which I have been speaking were not taken from the feet of the medium—and in view of the facts I have narrated who will dare say they were?—from whose feet were they taken?

Here is a wall against which sceptical scientists, bigoted theologians, conjurers, and incompetent judges are invited to knock their heads, with the caution that, in the event of a collision, the heads will be smashed, for assuredly this wall, like every other fact in nature, will stand firm as the everlasting hills.

My own theory—and I shall hold it until I get a better—is, these moulds are indeed the "footprints of angels," and as such they are to me very precious.

In some of the cathedrals of Europe there are servitors who, for a consideration, will open for inspection cabinets filled with holy relics, some of which, on account of their

preciousness, are deposited in golden caskets, and to which there clings the mysterious sanctity of ages, but amongst these there is to be found nothing so calculated to stir to its deepest depths the human soul as these moulds; for, granting these relics are what they are represented to be, they at best but illustrate the history of a dead past, whereas our simple piece of wax, so moulded, like the falling apple which to the prophetic eye of Newton brought a revelation big with glorious results, tells of a future, compared with which the highest developments of life and culture hitherto attained are like the faintest streaks of morning light when compared with the full unclouded splendour of noonday.

My task is now finished. I have endeavoured to give a faithful record of the facts connected with Miss Wood's visit to Derbyshire, in the order of their occurrence. Doubtless, my statement in some of its details to a large number of persons will appear incredible. But I am of opinion that if in any place conditions as good as those we were able to offer Miss Wood in Belper and Derby are given, the same results may be obtained through her mediumship.

I feel it in my heart to say that the best thanks of the great body of investigators into Spiritualism in this country are due to our friends in Newcastle, who have succeeded in developing to such a state of perfection so excellent a servant of the spirit-world.

Of Miss Wood as a medium I cannot speak too highly. By her conduct during the ordeal through which she passed, she gained for herself the full confidence and esteem of all who were privileged to attend her seances. I can only hope that her career in the future will be as pleasant as was her short sojourn in Derbyshire.—W.P.A.





## CHAPTER XII.

“Anybody can Make Wax Moulds”—The Hon. Alexander Aksakoff—What Became of the Moulds?—“What Kind of Spirits are they?”—Conclusion.

Some months after Miss Wood's visit to Belper Dr. George Sexton delivered two lectures in the Court-room on Spiritualism. At the close of the one at which I occupied the chair the wax moulds were exhibited to the audience and an explanation given as to how they were made.

“Oh! Anybody could make them,” called out one of the audience, amidst laughter.

“Very well,” I replied. “I suppose you are ‘anybody.’ You have heard how these were made, and I am prepared to swear on oath that they were prepared as stated, for I bought the wax from Mr. Birkinshaw, the chemist, cut it up into small pieces, put it into the pail of hot water immediately before the seance at which the moulds were made, and the whole took place before my face; so that I, as well as a score of other persons who were present at the seance, and who are present here to-night, are quite sure that they were produced under the conditions stated.

“I am an iron-moulder, was apprenticed to the trade, have been journeyman, foreman, and am now an employer, and am able to say for certain that the moulds could not possibly be taken off the feet unless the feet were first dematerialised, or partly dematerialised. The very fine portions of wax round and between the toes all remain perfect, as any of you can see at the close.

“Now to prove whether such moulds can be made by ‘anybody,’ you shall choose a committee of your own friends, and have three months in which to practise, and if at the end of that time you, or any of your committee, can make a similar wax mould off any of your feet, I pledge my word here and now to give you £50.

“It should be worth your while to try if it can be so easily done ; further, if we are all deceived, you would enlighten us and set us right on this point, for which we should be very thankful, as it has been our strong objection to being deceived that has caused us to seriously investigate the subject.”

The laugh ceased, and I have never heard that “anybody” has even made the attempt.

Be it remembered this is not a question of any *special conditions* for obtaining spirit phenomena, it is reduced to a simple mechanical performance, which any person should soon be able to accomplish if it is so easy.

#### WHAT BECAME OF THE MOULDS?

Mr. Adshead kept them in a case made for the purpose for a number of years, and showed them to any person wishing to see them. I was under the impression that they were afterwards sent to the Hon. A. Aksakoff, Privy Councillor, of St. Petersburg, and that *he* returned plaster casts of the feet instead of the moulds. I wrote through a friend in London to obtain information on the point, and received a letter in reply as follows, viz :—

ST. PETERSBURG, December 16th, 1899.

In 1886 I was printing my answer to Hartmann and was in quest of good moulds ; so wrote to Mr. Adshead, whose account I had read in the *Medium and Daybreak*, asking him to send me his, but he was unwilling to part with them.

Finally, I persuaded him to take casts of the moulds, this being the best means for preserving the *fact*, as the moulds were already becoming deteriorated.

To this he ultimately agreed. He first took photos of the moulds, then run the moulds full of plaster, and then dissolved the wax moulds from the plaster casts, by putting them in boiling water.

I have two photos of the wax moulds and three of the plaster casts, taken by Mr. Schmidt, of Belper.

As I afterwards received some other casts (obtained in presence of the same medium) from Mrs. Reimers; also from Mr. Oxley, of Manchester, I decided to publish the latter, which were the most perfect, although Mr. Adshead's have an intrinsic value."

(Signed) ALEXANDER AKSAKOFF.

The plaster casts, made at the solicitation of the Hon. A. Aksakoff, have been handed to me, and are now in my possession, so that any person desiring to see them can do so at my house.

I may here state that while Miss Wood was in Belper she was the guest of my brother Frederick and wife one week, and of my brother Samuel and wife the second week. During the week she was in Derby she was the guest of Mrs. Ford, who has now been my wife nearly 20 years. They have all borne testimony to her remarkable and genuine mediumship.

One thing that struck me was that she readily submitted to any test we suggested, and never appeared to be the least concerned as to whether any manifestations appeared or not.

In conclusion, I commenced to investigate as a thorough sceptic as to spirit return. For a considerable time I was suspicious of fraud, but did not allow my suspicion to prevent me from honestly investigating the subject. Looking back over the quarter of a century that has passed, I have no reason to doubt the genuineness of any of the manifestations recorded in these pages, and am quite

certain as to those witnessed in the presence of Miss Wood in Belper.

I can bear testimony, on oath, that they were genuine with as much confidence as I can to any incidents that have come under my own notice in other departments during the whole period of my life.

Some of my friends have said: "Oh, you are deceived. It is of the devil. He can appear as an angel of light and deceive the 'very elect.'" "

In reply to this, I am not personally acquainted either with his Satanic Majesty or any of the "very elect," but if the spiritual manifestations I have witnessed, along with other friends, on many occasions, numbers of them in our own homes, were of the devil, all I can say is: "Come devil; come often, and so arrange thy multifarious business that thou mayest be able to prolong thy visits, which have hitherto been all too short." Some of them have been the veriest Bethels.

A clergyman said to me: "Spirits may be permitted to come back; but what kind are they? They are only evil spirits and their teaching is baneful." In reply, I asked: "Where did you learn that they are all evil spirits and that their teaching is baneful? My experience has taught me that they are the spirits of human beings from all parts of our earth—good, bad, and indifferent."

I have listened to or read of characteristic communications from spirits of a low order as well as those of a high state of development, from murderers and their victims, from a suicide who had not had the courage to face his difficulties here, and begged for sympathy as for very life; from men-stealers, slave dealers, and from the weary, worn slave; from the gambler, member of the Stock Exchange, heart-breaker, pirate, brigand, liar,

and thief ; from the miserable money-loving, church-going miser, who on earth had made broad his phylacteries, and for a pretence had made long prayers, but who, on the "other side," still haunted by the nightmare of his money-bags, cried out in the bitterness of his soul : "Oh, how dark and cold ; dark and cold !" (Not hot.) From the priest, who, screaming through his teeth, in his misery, exclaimed : "I, a priest, lived a double life, a life of deception on earth ; but as soon as I entered the spirit-world my mask fell off and I stood clad in filthy rags and tatters ; laughed at and mocked by the low, degraded spirits among whom it was my lot to dwell. Oh ! Woe is the man who, occupying the high and responsible office of priest and religious teacher, acts the part of a deceiver. Terribly sad but just is my lot. Oh, that I had been wise in time !" From earthly crowned heads, princes and princesses. A princess (not of the house of Brunswick) controlling the medium, said : "I come to warn you against the use of the intoxicating cup. When on earth my lot was cast in the lap of luxury. I had everything for which my heart could wish, but I had nothing practical to occupy my time and attention. I imperceptibly gave way to the luring wine cup till I became a perfect slave to it. My lot in the spirit world for a long period was among wine-bibbers and drunkards. My sufferings in such company were indescribably acute." With tears running copiously down the medium's cheeks, the control besought all present most earnestly and tenderly not only to abstain from liquor, but to do all they possibly could to save others from its dire influence, and especially the young.

From ministers of all creeds ; from some of them satisfied, because they had lived up to their light, others grieving because they had thought more of the fleece than of the flock. From statesmen of

low and high degree. From the learned and the illiterate; the savage and the sage. From those who had grown rich on others' downfall.

From the millionaire, the beggar, the crossing sweeper, and his poor widowed mother, the poor in by far the most cases being the happier.

From the professional man, the honest, industrious artisan, and the follower of the plough. From high and lofty spirits, who, when on earth, went about doing good, and still were happy in ministering to "the spirits in prison."

From the spirit of the honourable and hoary-headed pilgrim, and the prattling child. From friends and neighbours, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children, with their loving greetings from the summer-land, bidding us be faithful in the performance of all our duties, assuring us of their assistance under all trying circumstances.

From Albert the good, and his Princess daughter, from Bishop Colenso, Dr. Livingstone, William Howitt, Thomas Carlyle, Thiers, Gambetta, and Garibaldi; who, by faith, when on earth, had struggled with mighty difficulties for the upliftment of humanity.

And what shall I say more? for time would fail me to tell of Thompson, and of Clarkson, and of Wilberforce, and of John Brown, of Harper's Ferry, of Lloyd Garrison, and of Lincoln, who, through faith, subdued the kingdom of oppression, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of a hireling priesthood who, Bible in hand, preached slavery as a divine institution, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of alien slaveocracy, burst the bonds of the slaves and let the oppressed go free.

Some of whom had trials of cruel mockings, of bonds, imprisonment, and of death—of whom the age was not worthy.

These are among the myriads of spirits who have returned, and who are unanimous in declaring that neither pope, bishop, priest, or minister, can by all their prayers save a single individual from the just consequences of his own actions.

They all join in reiterating the solemn declaration :  
“ Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

“ My sun goes down the golden west,  
Where dimly I can see  
Fair isles of rest among the blest,  
And loved ones wait for me.

I know not when my bark will glide  
Within the sun-kissed bay ;  
But patiently my time I bide—  
The dawn of endless May.”—*Bishop A. Beales.*

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APPENDIX.

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THE LATE HENRY URBAN SMEDLEY.

## THE LATE HENRY URBAN SMEDLEY.

One night, some time after the passing on of my son, he was controlling the medium at a seance. I said: "Urban, I am asked for your photo and a short account of your life for the *Two Worlds*. What do you say about it?"

"If you think it desirable, you can send it, but let Alfred Kitson write the account," he replied, which request was complied with.

*From the TWO WORLDS, April 17th, 1896.*

The subject of this brief sketch was, perhaps, best known for his indefatigable labours in connection with the Children's Progressive Lyceum movement. He regularly attended the Lyceum Annual Conferences, and was elected a member of the Lyceum Publishing Committee on its formation at Liverpool in 1892; and I, as its secretary, am able to testify that, by *his example* and efforts, he was the means of between £20 and £30 being sent from his native town—Belper.

He was also ardently attached to the Band of Hope cause, and worked energetically for its promulgation among the young, sparing neither time, talent, nor money for the furtherance of any cause that he espoused.

His father and mother being members of the Methodist Free Church in Belper, he was sent to its Sunday school, and also attended its services until he was twelve years of age, when his parents, having investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism and proved them to be true, and having the moral courage to espouse them, he left both Sunday school and church and joined the Spiritualists, who were having occasional lectures and meetings in the town. He found the ethical and religious teachings of Spiritualism appealed to his highest conceptions of justice and righteousness. About two years later he had the misfortune to lose his mother, who passed to the Summerland. Shortly after, he and a younger brother were sent to school, first to Mr. Harrison's college at Grasmere, and then to Alesley Park College (Mr. Wyles, principal), near Coventry, where he stayed until he was nearly 17 years old. Returning home, he entered the office at the works.

As a boy he was very delicate, sensitive, retiring, and extremely conscientious, so much so that his parents never knew him tell a lie, neither to save himself nor anyone else from blame. Neither fear of punishment nor promise of reward could induce him to do what he felt to be wrong. His motto was, "Shun the wrong because it *is* wrong, do right because it *is* right." His sense of filial obedience is beautifully shown in the following simple incident. A public temperance meeting was to be held in the town; his parents being away from home at the time, he said to his brother, "Are you going to the temperance meeting to-night?"

"No," was the reply. "I have to go to such a place."

"Well," remarked Urban, "you know what my father's wishes are, and we ought to carry them out when he is away, just the same as if he was at home. *I shall go!*"

Although he developed no special gift as a medium, yet he possessed that rare trait of character of being an energetic and consistent worker: a class of individuals every good cause needs. He filled the office of secretary for both Band of Hope and Spiritualist's Society, and the Lyceum, and was always at his post at the appointed time.

He will be well remembered by the delegates to the Lyceum Conferences prior to 1894. Being of a quiet, serious nature, with very little love of the humorous, whenever he rose to speak his remarks were pointed, clear, and pertinent to the question at issue.

It was with deep feelings of regret that the Lyceum Conference at Dewsbury, in May, 1894, received a letter from him apologising for inability to attend on account of illness, and wishing its deliberations God-speed and success. A vote of deep sympathy and a hope for his speedy recovery was passed unanimously. But it was not to be. He continued to get worse, and finally joined his mother in the Summerland on April 13th, 1895, at the age of nearly 34 years. Being of a delicate nature all his life, he always felt he would not live until he was 40, and his conscientious scruples would not allow him to marry and leave a mourning widow and children.

His earthly remains were interred in the Belper Cemetery on April 15th, 1895, the writer, at his prior request, officiating. The corpse was carried to the Jubilee Hall, where a Lyceum memorial service was held, at which both officers of the Lyceum and society were present, and took part in the responses. The whole service was very impressive, and was favourably commented on in the local papers.

During the last few weeks of his illness he loved to converse about the Summerland in a rational way. The spiritual teachings and philosophy afforded him every satisfaction. He was buoyed up with no false hopes and vain illusions; he realised that in both worlds law prevails, as the following brief excerpts will show.

On one occasion he said to his father, "Father, I have often wished to devote more time to reading and studying and gaining of knowledge, but when I had done my work there always seemed so much to do, and so many things to attend to in connection with one society or another, that I never had much time to spare for anything else."

"Well, Urban, my boy," his father said, "for all your labours in every good cause, your reward will be sure. God will repay you for all you have done for Him, for is it not written: 'That inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.' When in your spiritual home, your opportunities for gaining knowledge and for the development of your spiritual faculties, will, no doubt, be much greater than they have been here. There you will be free from pain and weariness of body, and all your powers will find sweet employ; your labours will administer to your pleasures; there will be no tasks, no overwork, no want of opportunity to do good."

At another time he said, "Father, I think when I pass away from this body, my spiritual friends will take me to some place of calm repose where I shall rest, rest, rest, until my spiritual faculties are all revived and strengthened, and then I shall be ready to enter on my new work in the Summerland. Do not you think it will be so?"

"Yes," replied the father; "no doubt your spiritual body will to some extent and for some time be affected by the long sickness and great weariness you are suffering here, but you will in due time be thoroughly relieved from all sense of weariness and pain, and then you will be as free as the sunshine and light as the air."

Thus father and son mutually discussed the problem of the change called death as the latter neared it day by day without fear and trembling. It was not to be a hopeless plunge into the great unknown, but the light of knowledge illuminated his pathway to the land where unsatisfied aspirations find their full satisfaction, and the fruitions of a well-ordered life bloom in perpetual loveliness, cheering the heart and inspiring to further exertions.

The following brief incidents will show how fully prepared and eager for the change he was. About a week before he passed away his mother proposed putting a bed in the drawing-room, which it was thought would be a pleasant change for him and more convenient for all. "I am quite willing to do anything for the best," he quietly remarked on hearing of it, "but I would rather go higher up than lower down."

He received the following communication from his mother in the Summerland, which shows how well we are watched over, and that the way we discharge our duties to the orphan is noticed. "God bless you, my own boy, Urban. Put your trust in God, and He will sustain you to the end. We are often with you. Tell father and mother I thank them with all my heart for their kindness in comforting you all they can. She has, indeed, been a good mother to my children. God bless and reward her for all her kindness." This was written through the Ouija, while the father and mother were at the evening service.

On a subsequent occasion she wrote, "I bring you my sympathy and love. I feel very much for your sufferings. Some of us are always with you, and we help and render you all the assistance we can. You must bear up with patience until your deliverance shall come." On some of these occasions he would plead very earnestly and pathetically to be liberated and taken with her. To which she replied, "No, my Urban, we cannot take you with us now; God's wise laws cannot be interfered with. Nature must take her course. You must wait with patience a little longer, until His good time comes. I promise, my son, we will not leave you. And when the time of your birth into the Summerland comes we will take you by the hand and escort you to your new and beautiful home." And when the end did come she was waiting to receive her dutiful son.

It has been the privilege of the writer to have his presence described by a clairvoyant who never knew him in earth life; and messages he has given to me have been confirmed by his parents, and *vice versa*. His anticipations and aspirations regarding the Summerland are more than realised; their fulness and perfection are indescribable. His love for the young is not diminished, but increased. He has taken up the thread of life's work where it was dropped here. Of him it may truly be written, *Semper fidelis*.

ALFRED KITSON.

“When soul-sickened by delusion and deception you have shivered beneath the icy touch of doubt, have you never felt a sudden glow of love and faith arise within your breast? It was perhaps the kiss of the mother you wept as lost, while she smiled at your error.”

MAZZINI.

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“I know no rule which forbids a Christian to examine into the system called Spiritualism. . . . . It is a question, in the first instance, of evidence; it then follows to explain, so far as we can, such facts as may have been established.”

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

" I think heaven will not shut for evermore  
 Without a knocker left upon the door,  
 Lest some belated wanderer should come  
 Heartbroken, asking just to die at home ;  
 So that the Father will at last forgive,  
 And looking on His face that soul shall live.  
 I think there will be watchmen through the night  
 Lest any, afar off, turn them to the light ;  
 That He who loved us into life must be  
 A Father infinitely fatherly,  
 And, groping for Him, these shall find their way  
 From outer dark, thro' twilight into day."

FROM GERALD MASSEY'S

" NON-ETERNITY OF PUNISHMENT."

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" Who toiled a slave may live anew a Prince  
     For gentle worthiness and merit won ;  
 Who ruled a King may wander there in rags  
     For things done and undone."

“It (Spiritualism) has been for me, in common with many others, such a lifting of the mental horizon and letting-in of the heavens—such a formation of faith into facts—that I can only compare life without it to sailing on board ship with hatches battened down and being kept a prisoner, living by the light of a candle, and then suddenly on some splendid starry night allowed to go on deck for the first time to see the stupendous mechanism of the heavens all aglow with the glory of God.”

GERALD MASSEY.

## THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.

By "M.A. (OXON)."

### ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment. If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice ; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct seances, and what to expect. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestation. Engage in cheerful, but not frivolous, conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times at short intervals before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful seance.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held *over*, but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let someone take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given, as the alphabet is slowly repeated, at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for "No," three for "Yes," and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and, if not, what order you should take. After this ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer.

Lastly, try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

*Enquirers are directed to the following  
Periodicals as representative of English  
Spiritualism :—*

LIGHT (Weekly, 2d.). 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON, W.C.

TWO WORLDS (Weekly, 1d.). 18, CORPORATION STREET,  
MANCHESTER.

LYCEUM BANNER (Monthly, 1d.). 26, OSNABURGH  
STREET, LONDON, N.W.

SPIRITUAL REVIEW (Monthly, 3d.). 26, OSNABURGH  
STREET, LONDON, N.W.

PSYCHE (Monthly, 1d.). 22, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

THE COMING DAY (Monthly, 3d.). WILLIAMS AND  
NORGATE, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

BANNER OF LIGHT, BOSTON, U.S.A.

RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL,  
SAN FRANCISCO.

PROGRESSIVE THINKER, CHICAGO.

LIGHT OF TRUTH, OHIO.

Mr. J. MORSE,  
26, OSNABURGH  
ST., LONDON,  
Agent.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF Emma Hardinge Britten,  
The Pioneer Lecturer and Historian of Modern  
Spiritualism, 5/4 Post Free; Offices of Light, Two  
Worlds, and Lyceum Banner.